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THE

MIND AND WORDS

OF

JESUS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE MORNING AND NIGHT WATCHES," "THE THOUGHTS OF GOD," &c. &c.

Three Hundred and Tenth Thousand.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.
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The Mind of Jesus.

THE MIND OF JESUS! What a study is this! To attain a dim reflection of it, is the ambition of angels —higher they cannot soar. "To be conformed to the image of His Son" is the end of God in the predestination of His Church from all eternity. "We shall be *like* Him," is the Bible picture of *Heaven*!

But how lofty such a standard! How all creature-perfection shrinks abashed and confounded before this Divine portraiture! The true "Angel standing in the sun," He alone projects no shadow; so bathed in the glories of Deity, likeness to Him becomes like the light in which He is shrouded,—"no man can approach unto it." May we not, however, seek at least to approximate, though we cannot adequately resemble? It is impossible on earth to associate with a fellow-being without getting in some degree assimilated to him. So, the more we study "the Mind of Christ,"—the more we are in his company —holding converse with Him as our best and dearest Friend—catching up His holy looks and holy deeds —the more shall we be "transformed into the same image."

"Consider," says the Great Apostle (literally '*gaze* on') "Christ Jesus" (Heb. iii. 1). Study feature

28

by feature, lineament by lineament, of that Peerless Example. "*Gaze*" on the Sun of Righteousness, till, like gazing long on the natural sun, you carry away with you, on your spiritual vision, dazzling images of His brightness and glory. Though He be the Archetype of all Goodness, remember He is no shadowy model;—though the Infinite Jehovah, He was and is, "the *Man* Christ Jesus."

We must never, indeed, forget, that it is not the *Mind*, but the *Work* of Immanuel which lies at the foundation of a sinner's hope. He must be known as a *Saviour*, before He is studied as an *Example*. His doing and dying is the centre jewel, of which all the virtues of His holy life are merely the setting. But neither must we overlook the Scripture obligation to walk in His footsteps and imbibe His Spirit, for "if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is *none of His!*"

Oh, that each individual Christian were more Saviour-like! that, in the manifestation of a holy character and heavenly demeanour, it might be said in some feeble measure of the faint and imperfect reflection—"Such was *Jesus!*"

How far short we are of such a criterion, mournful experience can testify. But it is at least comforting to know that there is a day coming, when, in the full vision and fruition of the Glorious Original, the exhortation of our motto-verse will be needed no more; when we shall be able to say, in the words of an inspired apostle,

"We *have* the MIND OF CHRIST!"

1st Morning of Month.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"I have compassion on the multitude."—Mark viii. 2.

Compassion. What a pattern to His people, the tender *compassion* of Jesus! He found the world He came to redeem, a moral Bethesda. The wail of suffering humanity was everywhere borne to His ear. It was His delight to walk its porches; to pity, relieve, comfort, save! The faintest cry of misery arrested His footsteps—stirred a ripple in this fountain of Infinite Love. Was it a *leper*,—that dreaded name which entailed a life-long exile from friendly looks and kindly words? There was *One*, at least, who had tones and deeds of tenderness for the outcast: "*Jesus*, being moved with compassion, put forth His hand and *touched* him!" Was it some blind beggars on the Jericho highway, grop-

ing in darkness, pleading for help? "*Jesus* stood still, and had compassion on them, and touched their eyes!" Was it the speechless pleadings of a widow's tears at the gate of Nain, when she followed her earthly pride and prop to the grave? "When the *Lord* saw her, He had compassion on her, and said, Weep not!" Even when He rebukes, the bow of compassion is seen in the cloud; or rather, that cloud, as it passes, dissolves in a rain-shower of mercy. He pronounces Jerusalem "*desolate*," but the doom is uttered amid a flood of anguished sorrow!

Reader! do the compassionate words and deeds of a tender Saviour find any feeble echo and transcript in yours? As you traverse in thought the wastes of human wretchedness, does the spectacle give rise, not to the mere emotional feeling which weeps itself away in sentimental tears, but to an earnest desire to *do something* to mitigate the suf-

ferings of woe-worn humanity? How vast and world-wide the claims on your compassion!—now near, now at a distance: the unmet and unanswered cry of perishing millions abroad; — the heathendom which lies unsuccoured at your own door;—the public charity languishing;—the mission staff dwarfed and crippled from lack of needful funds;—a suffering district—a starving family—a poor neighbour—a helpless orphan;—it may be, some crowded hovel, where misery and vice run riot—or some lonely sick-chamber, where the dim lamp has been wasting for dreary nights;—or some desolate home which death has entered, where "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not," and where some sobbing heart, under the tattered garb of poverty, mourns unsolaced and unpitied, its "loved and lost." Are there none such within your reach, to whom a trifling pittance would be as an angel of mercy? How it would hallow all you

possess, were you to seek to live as almoner of Jehovah's bounties! If He has given you of this world's substance, remember it is bestowed, not to be greedily hoarded or lavishly squandered. Property and wealth are talents to be traded on and laid out for the good of others,—sacred trusts, not selfishly to be *enjoyed*, but generously to be *employed*.

"The poor are the representatives of Jesus, their wants He considers as His own, and He will recompense accordingly." The feeblest expression of Christian pity and love, though it be but the widow's mite, or the cup of cold water, or the kindly look and word when there is neither mite nor cup to give, yet, if done in *His* name, it is entered in the "book of life" as a "loan to the Lord;" and in that day when "the books are opened," the loan will be paid back with usury.

2ND MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Not my will, but Thine be done!"—LUKE XXII. 42.

Resignation in Trial.

WHERE was there ever resignation like this? The life of Jesus was one long martyrdom. From Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's cross, there was scarce one break in the clouds; these gathered more darkly and ominously around Him till they burst over His devoted head as He uttered His expiring cry. Yet, throughout this pilgrimage of sorrow, no murmuring accent escaped His lips. The most suffering of all suffering lives was one of uncomplaining submission.

"Not *my* will, but *Thy* will," was the motto of His wondrous Being! When He came into the world He thus announced His advent, "Lo, I come, I delight to do *Thy will*, O my God!" When He left it, we listen to the same

prayer of blended agony and acquiescence, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me! *Nevertheless* not as *I will*, but as *Thou wilt*."

Reader, is this mind also in *you?* Ah, what are your trials compared to His! What the ripples in your tide of woe, compared to the waves and billows which swept over Him! If He, the spotless Lamb of God, "murmured not," how can *you* murmur? *His* were the sufferings of a bosom never once darkened with the passing shadow of guilt or sin. *Your* severest sufferings are deserved, yea, infinitely less *than* deserved! Are you tempted to indulge in hard suspicions, as to God's faithfulness and love, in appointing some peculiar trial? Ask yourself, Would Jesus have done *this?* Should *I* seek to pry into "the deep things of God," when *He*, in the spirit of a weaned child, was satisfied with the solution, "*Even so, Father, for so it seems good in Thy sight?*"

"Even so, *Father!*" Afflicted one! "tossed with tempest, and not comforted," take that *word* on which Thy Lord pillowed His suffering head, and make it, as He did, the secret of thy resignation.

The sick child will take the bitterest draught from a *father's* hand. "This cup which Thou, O God, givest me to drink, shall I not drink it?" Be it mine to lie passive in the arms of Thy chastening love, exulting in the assurance that all Thy appointments, though sovereign, are never arbitrary, but that there is a gracious "need be" in them all. "My Father!" my Covenant God! the God who *spared not Jesus!* It may well hush every repining word.

Thus drinking deep of His sweet spirit of submission, you will be able to meet, yea, even to welcome, your sorest cross, saying, "Yes, Lord, all *is* well, just because it is Thy blessed will. Take me, use me, chasten me, as seemeth

good in Thy sight. My will is resolved into thine. This trial is dark; I cannot see the 'why and the wherefore' of it—but 'not my will, but Thy will!' The gourd is withered; I cannot see the reason of so speedy a dissolution of the loved earthly shelter; sense and sight ask in vain why these leaves of earthly refreshment have been doomed so soon to droop in sadness and sorrow. But it is enough. 'The Lord prepared the worm;' 'not *my* will, but *Thy* will!'"

Oh, how does the stricken soul honour God by thus being *dumb* in the midst of dark and perplexing dealings, recognizing in these part of the needed discipline and training for a sorrowless, sinless, deathless world; regarding every trial as a link in the chain which draws it to heaven. The brightest of the white-robed multitude will be found to be those here baptized with suffering, and bathed in tears!

3RD MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"
—LUKE II. 49.

Devotedness to God.

"MY meat and my drink are to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." That *one* object brought Jesus from heaven:—that *one* object He pursued with unflinching, undeviating constancy, until He could say, "It is finished."

However short man comes of *his* "chief end," "Glory to God in the highest" was the motive, the rule, the exponent of every act of that wondrous life. With us, the magnet of the soul, even when truest, is ever subject to partial oscillations and depressions, trembling at times away from its great attraction-point. *His* never knew one tremulous wavering from its All-glorious centre. With Him there were no ebbs and

flows,—no fits and starts. He could say, in the words of that prophetic psalm which speaks so pre-eminently of Himself, "I have set the Lord *always* before me!"

Reader! do you feel that, in some feeble measure, this lofty life-motto of the sinless Son of God is written on your home and heart, regulating your actions, chastening your joys, quickening your hopes, giving energy and direction to your whole being, subordinating all the affections of your nature to their high destiny? With pure and unalloyed motives, with a single eye, and a single aim, can you say, somewhat in the spirit of His brightest follower, "This *one* thing I do?" Are you ready to regard all you have—rank, name, talents, riches, influence, distinctions—valuable, only so far as they contribute to promote the glory of Him who is "first and last, and all in all?" Seek to feel that your heavenly Father's

is not only *a* business, but *the* business of life. "Whose I am, and whom I serve,"—let this be the superscription written on your thoughts and deeds, your employments and enjoyments, your sleeping and waking. Be not, as the fixed stars, cold and distant; but be ever bathing in the sunshine of conscious nearness to Him who is the sun and centre of all happiness and joy.

Each has some appointed work to perform, some little niche in the spiritual temple to occupy. Yours may be no splendid services, no flaming or brilliant actions to blaze and dazzle in the eye of man. It may be the quiet unobtrusive inner work, the secret prayer, the mortified sin, the forgiven injury, the trifling act of self-sacrifice for God's glory and the good of others, of which no eye but the Eye which seeth in secret is cognizant. It matters not how *small*. Remember, with Him, motive dignifies action. It is not *what* we do, but *how*

we do it. He can be glorified in *little* things as well as *great* things; and by nothing more than the daily walk, the daily life.

Beware of anything that would interfere with a surrender of heart and soul to His service;—worldly entanglements, indulged sin, an uneven walk, a divided heart, nestling in creature comforts, shrinking from the cross. How many hazard, if they do not make shipwreck, of their eternal hopes by becoming *idlers* in the vineyard; lingerers, like Lot; world-lovers, like Demas; "do-nothing Christians," like the inhabitants of Meroz! The command is, "Go, work." *Words* tell what you *should* be; *deeds* tell what you *are.* Let those around you see there is a reality in walking *with* God, and working *for* God!

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

4TH MORNING

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—LUKE XXIII. 34.

Forgiveness of Injuries.

MANY a death-struggle has been made to save a friend. A dying Saviour gathers up His expiring breath to plead for his foes! At the climax of His own woe, and of human ingratitude—man-forsaken, and God-deserted—His faltering voice mingles with the shout of His murderers,—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!" Had the faithless Peter been there, could he have wondered at the reply to a former question,—"Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him,—till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. xviii. 21).

Superiority to insult and ignominy,

with some, proceeds from a callous and indifferent temperament,—a cold, phlegmatic, stoical insensibility alike to kindness or unkindness. It was not so with Jesus. The tender sensibilities of His holy nature rendered Him keenly sensitive to ingratitude and injury, whether this was manifested in the malice of undisguised enmity, or the treachery of trusted friendship. Perhaps to a noble nature the latter of these is the more deeply wounding. Many are inclined to forgive an open and unmasked antagonist, who are not so willing to forget or forgive heartless faithlessness, or unrequited love. But see, too, in this respect, the conduct of the blessed Redeemer! Mark how He deals with his own disciples who had basely forsaken Him and fled, and that, too, in the hour He most needed their sympathy! No sooner does He rise from the dead than He hastens to disarm their fears and to assure them of an unaltered and

unalterable affection. "Go tell *my brethren*," is the first message He sends; "*Peace be unto you*," is the salutation at the first meeting; "*Children!*" is the word with which He first greets them on the shores of Tiberias. Even Joseph (the Old Testament type and pattern of generous forgiveness), when he makes himself known to his brethren, recalls the bitter thought, "whom ye sold into Egypt." The true Joseph, when *He* reveals Himself to His disciples, buries in oblivion the memory of bygone faithlessness. He *meets* them with a benediction. He *leaves* them at His ascension with the same;—"He lifted up His hands and blessed them!"

Reader! follow in all this the spirit of your Lord and Master. In rising from the study of His holy example, seek to feel that with you there should be no such name, no such word, as *enemy*. Harbour no resentful thought, indulge in no bitter recrimination. Surrender

yourself to no sullen fretfulness. Let "the law of kindness" be in your heart. Put the best construction on the failings of others. Make no injurious comments on their frailties; no uncharitable insinuations. "Consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted." When disposed at any time to cherish an unforgiving spirit towards a brother, think,—if thy God had retained His anger for ever, where wouldst thou have been? If *He*, the Infinite One, who might have spurned thee for ever from His presence, hath had patience with thee, and forgiven thee *all;*—wilt *thou*, on account of some petty grievance, which thy calmer moments would pronounce unworthy of a thought, indulge in the look of cold estrangement, the unrelenting word, or unforgiving deed? "If any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

5TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"I am meek and lowly in heart."—MATT. XI. 29.

Meekness. THERE is often a beautiful blending of majesty and humility, magnanimity and lowliness, in great minds. The mightiest and holiest of all Beings that ever trod our world was the meekest of all. "The Ancient of Days" was as the "infant of days." He who had listened to nothing but angel-melodies from all eternity, found, while on earth, melody in the lispings of an infant's voice, or in an outcast's tears! No wonder an innocent *lamb* was His emblem, or that the anointing Spirit came down upon Him in the form of the gentle *dove*. He had the wealth of worlds at His feet. The hosts of heaven had only to be summoned as His retinue. But all the pageantry of the world, all its

dreams of carnal glory, had, for Him, no fascination. The Tempter, from a mountain-summit, shewed Him a wide scene of "splendid misery;" but He spurned alike the thought and the adversary away. John and James would call down fire from heaven on a Samaritan village; He rebukes the vengeful suggestion. Peter, on the night of the betrayal, cuts off the ear of an assassin; the intended Victim, again, only challenges His disciple, and heals His enemy!

Arraigned before Pilate's judgment-seat, how meekly He bears nameless wrongs and indignities! Suspended on the cross—the execrations of the multitude are rising around, but He hears as though He heard them not; they extract no angry look, no bitter word—"Behold the *Lamb* of God!" Need we wonder that "meekness" and "poverty of spirit" should stand foremost in His own cluster of beatitudes;

that He should select *this* among all His other qualities for the peculiar study and imitation of His disciples, "Learn of Me, *for* I am *meek;*" or that an apostle should exhort "by the *meekness* and *gentleness* of Christ?"

How different the world's maxims, and His! The *world's*—"Resent the affront,—vindicate honour!" *His*—"Overcome evil with good!" The *world's*—"Only let it be when for your *faults* ye are buffeted that ye take it patiently." *His*—"When ye do *well* and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; *this* is acceptable with God" (1 Pet. ii. 20).

Reader! strive to obtain, like your adorable Lord, this "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price." Be "clothed" with gentleness and humility. Follow not the world's fleeting shadows that mock you as you grasp them. If always aspiring—ever soaring on the wing—you are likely to become discon-

tented, proud, selfish, time-serving. In whatever position of life God has placed you, be satisfied. What! ambitious to be on a pinnacle of the temple—a higher place in the Church, or in the world?—Satan might hurl you down! "Be not high-minded, but fear." And with respect to others, honour their gifts, contemplate their excellences only to imitate them. Speak kindly, act gently, "condescend to men of low estate."

Be assured, no happiness is equal to that enjoyed by the "*meek Christian.*" He has within him a perpetual inner sunshine, a perennial well-spring of peace. Never ruffled and fretted by real or imagined injuries, he puts the best construction on motives and actions, and by a gentle answer to unmerited reproach often disarms wrath.

6TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth."— MATT. XI. 25.

Thankfulness. A THANKFUL spirit pervaded the entire life of Jesus, and surrounded with a heavenly halo His otherwise darkened path. In moments we least expect to find it, this beauteous ray breaks through the gloom. In instituting the memorial of His *death*, He "*gave thanks!*" Even in crossing the Kedron to Gethsemane, "He sang an hymn!"

We know in seasons of deep sorrow and trial that everything wears a gloomy aspect. Dumb Nature herself to the burdened spirit seems as if she partook in the hues of sadness. The life of Jesus was one continuous experience of privation and woe—a "Valley of Baca," from first to last; yet, amid accents of plaintive sorrow, there are ever heard

subdued undertones of *thankfulness* and joy!

Ah, if He, the suffering "Man of Sorrows," could, during a life of unparalleled woe, lift up His heart in grateful acknowledgment to His Father in heaven, how ought the lives of those to be one perpetual "hymn of thankfulness," who are from day to day and hour to hour (for all they have, both temporally and spiritually) pensioners on God's bounty and love!

Reader, cultivate this thankful spirit; it will be to thee a perpetual feast. There is, or ought to be, with us no such thing as *small* mercies; all are *great*, because the least are undeserved. Indeed, a really thankful heart will extract motive for gratitude from everything, making the most even of scanty blessings. St Paul, when in his dungeon at Rome, a prisoner in chains, is heard to say, "I have *all*, and abound!"

Guard, on the other hand, against that spirit of continual fretting and moping over fancied ills; that temptation to exaggerate the real or supposed disadvantages of our condition, magnifying the trifling inconveniences of every-day life into enormous evils. Think rather how much we have to be thankful for. The world in which we live, in spite of all the scars of sin and suffering upon it, is a happy world. It is not, as many would morbidly paint it, flooded with tears and strewn with wrecks, plaintive with a perpetual dirge of sorrow. True, the "Everlasting Hills" are in glory, but there are numberless eminences of grace, and love, and mercy below; many green spots in the lower valley, *many more than we deserve!*

God will reward a thankful spirit. Just as on earth, when a man receives with gratitude what is given, the donor is more disposed to give again; so also,

"the *Lord* loveth" a cheerful "receiver," as well as a cheerful "giver."

Let ours, moreover, be a *Gospel* thankfulness. Let the incense of a grateful spirit rise not only to the Great Giver of all good, but to our Covenant God in Christ. Let it be the spirit of the child exulting in the bounty and beneficence of his *Father's* house and home! "Giving *thanks* always for all things unto God and *the Father*, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

While the sweet melody of gratitude vibrates through every successive moment of our daily being, let love to our adorable Redeemer shew for *Whom* and for *what* it is we reserve our notes of loftiest and most fervent praise. "*Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!*"

7TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"For even Christ pleased not Himself."—ROM. XV. 3.

Unselfishness. Too legibly are the characters written on the fallen heart and a fallen world—"All seek their own!" Selfishness is the great law of our degenerated nature. When the love of God was dethroned from the soul, self vaulted into the vacant seat, and there, in some one of its Proteus shapes, continues to reign.

Jesus stands out for our imitation a grand solitary exception in the midst of a world of selfishness. His entire life was one abnegation of self; a beautiful living embodiment of that charity which "seeketh not her own." He who for others turned water into wine, and provided a miraculous supply for the fainting thousands in the wilderness, exerted no such miraculous power for

His own necessities. During His forty days' temptation, no table did He spread for Himself, no booth did He rear for His unpillowed head. Twice do we read of Him shedding tears: — on neither occasion were they for Himself. The approach of His cross and passion, instead of absorbing His thoughts in His own sufferings, seemed only to elicit new and more gracious promises to His people. When His enemies came to apprehend Him, His only stipulation was for His disciples' release— "Let these go their way." In the very act of departure, with all the boundless glories of eternity in sight, *they* were still all His care.

Ah, how different is the spirit of the world! With how many day after day is only a new oblation to that idol which never darkened with its shadow His holy heart; pampering their own wishes; "envying and grieving at the good of their neighbour;" unable to

brook the praise of a rival; establishing their own reputation on the ruins of another; thus engendering jealousy, discontent, peevishness, and every kindred unholy passion.

"But ye have not so learned Christ!" Reader! have you been sitting at the feet of Him who "pleased not Himself?" Are you "dying daily;"—dying to self as well as to sin? Are you animated with *this* as the high end and aim of existence,—to lay out your time, and talents, and opportunities, for God's glory, and the good of your fellow-men; not seeking your own interests, but rather ceding these, if, by doing so, another will be made happier, and your Saviour honoured? You may not have it in your power to manifest this "mind of Jesus" on a great scale, by enduring great sacrifices. Nor is this required. His denial of self had about it no repulsive austerity. But you can evince its holy influence and sway, by innumer-

able little offices of kindness and good-will; taking a generous interest in the welfare and pursuits of others, or engaging and co-operating in schemes for the mitigation of human misery.

Avoid *ostentation*,—another repulsive form of self. Be willing to be in the shade. Sound no trumpet before you. The evangelist Matthew made a great feast, which was graced by the presence of Jesus; in his Gospel he says not one word about it!

Seek to live more constantly and habitually under the constraining influence of the love of Jesus. Selfishness withers and dies beneath Calvary.

Ah, believer! if Christ had "pleased Himself,"—if He the true "Corn of Wheat," instead of falling into the ground and dying, had "abode alone," where wouldest *thou* have *been* this day?

8TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Jesus said unto him, It is written."—MATT. IV. 7.

Submission to God's Word. WE cannot fail to be struck, in the course of the Saviour's public teaching, with His constant appeal to the Word of God. While, at times, He utters, in His own name, the authoritative behest, "Verily, verily, *I* say unto you," He as often thus introduces some mighty work, or gives intimation of some impending event in His own momentous life, "These things must come to pass, that *the Scripture may be fulfilled, which saith.*" He commands His people to "search the Scriptures;" but He sets the example, by searching and submitting to them Himself. Whether He drives the money-changers from their sacrilegious traffic in the temple, or foils his great adversary on the mount

of temptation, he does so with the same weapon, "*It is written.*" When He rises from the grave, the theme of His first discourse is one impressive tribute to the value and authority of the same sacred oracles. The disciples on the road to Emmaus listen to nothing but *a Bible lesson.* "He expounded unto them *in all the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself."

How momentous the instruction herein conveyed! the necessity of the absolute subjection of the mind to God's written Word; — making churches, creeds, ministers, books, religious opinion,—all subordinate and subservient to this—"How readest thou?" rebuking the philosophy, "falsely so called," that would distort the plain statements of Revelation, and bring them to the bar of proud Reason.

If an infallible Redeemer, "a law to Himself," was submissive in all respects to the "*written* law," shall fallible man

refuse to sit with the teachableness of a little child, and listen to the Divine message? There may be, there *is*, in the Bible that at which Reason staggers: "we have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." But "*Thus saith the Lord*," is enough. Faith does not first ask what the bread is made of, but *eats* it. It does not analyze the components of the living stream, but with joy draws the water from "the wells of salvation."

Reader! take that Word as "the lamp to thy feet, and the light to thy path." In days when false lights are hung out, there is the more need of keeping the eye steadily fixed on the unerring beacon. Make the Bible the arbiter in all difficulties—the ultimate court of appeal. Like Mary, "sit at the feet of Jesus," willing only to learn of Him. How many perplexities it would save you! how many fatal steps in life it would prevent; how many tears!

"It is a great matter," says the noblest of modern Christian philosophers, "when the mind dwells on any passage of Scripture, just to think *how true it is*" (*Chalmers's Life*).

In every dubious question, when the foot is trembling on debatable ground, knowing not whether to advance or recede, make this the final criterion, "What saith the Scripture?" The world may remonstrate—erring friends may disapprove—Satan may tempt—ingenious arguments may explain away; but, with our finger on the revealed page, let the words of our Great Example be ever a divine formula for our guidance:—"*This* commandment have I received of my Father!"

9TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"He continued all night in prayer to God."—LUKE VI. 12.

Prayerfulness. WE speak of *this* Christian and *that* Christian as "a man of prayer." Jesus was emphatically so. The Spirit was "poured upon Him without measure," yet *He prayed!* He was incarnate Wisdom, "needing not that any should teach Him." He was infinite in His power, and boundless in His resources, yet—*He prayed!* How deeply sacred the prayerful memories that hover around the solitudes of Olivet and the shores of Tiberias! He seemed often to turn night into day to redeem moments for prayer, rather than lose the blessed privilege.

We are rarely, indeed, admitted into the solemnities of His inner life. The veil of night is generally between us and the Great High Priest, when He entered

"the holiest of all;" but we have enough to reveal the depth and fervour, the tenderness and confidingness of this blissful intercommunion with His heavenly Father. No morning dawns without His fetching fresh manna from the mercy-seat. "He wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned" (Isa. l. 4). Beautiful description!—a praying Redeemer, wakening, as if at early dawn, the ear of His Father, to get fresh supplies for the duties and the trials of the day! All His public acts were consecrated by prayer,—His baptism, His transfiguration, His miracles, His agony, His death. He breathed away His spirit in prayer. "His last breath," says Philip Henry, "was praying breath."

How sweet to think, in holding communion with God—*Jesus* drank of this very brook! He consecrated the bended knee and the silent chamber. He refreshed His fainting spirit at the same

great Fountain-head, which it is life for us to draw from, and death to forsake.

Reader! do you complain of your languid spirit, your drooping faith, your fitful affections, your lukewarm love? May you not trace much of what you deplore to an unfrequented chamber? The treasures are locked up from you, because you have suffered the key to rust; the hands hang down, because they have ceased to be uplifted in prayer. Without prayer!—It is the pilgrim without a staff—the seaman without a compass—the soldier going unarmed and unharnessed to battle.

Beware of encouraging what indisposes to prayer—going to the audience-chamber with soiled garments, the din of the world following you, its distracting thoughts hovering unforbidden over your spirit. Can you wonder that the living water refuses to flow through obstructed channels, or the heavenly light to pierce murky vapours?

On earth, fellowship with a lofty order of minds, imparts a certain nobility to the character; so, in a far higher sense, by communion with God you will be transformed into His image, and get assimilated to His likeness. Make every event in life a reason for fresh going to Him. If perplexed as to the path of duty, bring it to the test of prayer. If bowed down with anticipated trial,—"fearing to enter the cloud,"—remember Christ's preparation, "Sit ye here while I go and *pray* yonder."

Let prayer consecrate everything—your time, talents, pursuits, engagements, joys, sorrows, crosses, losses. By it, rough paths will be made smooth, trials disarmed of their bitterness, enjoyments hallowed and refined, the bread of the world turned into angels' food. "It is in the closet," says Payson, "the battle is lost or won!"

10TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."—EPH. v. 2.

Love to the Brethren.

"JESUS," says a writer, "came from heaven on the wings of love." It was the element in which He moved and walked. He sought to baptize the world afresh with it. When we find Him teaching us by love to vanquish an *enemy*, we need not wonder at the tenderness of His appeals to the *brethren* to "love one another." Like a fond father impressing his children, how the Divine Teacher lingers over the lesson, "This is *My* commandment!"

If selfishness had guided His actions, we might have expected Him to demand all His people's love for Himself. But He claims no such monopoly. He not only encourages mutual affection, but He makes it the badge of disciple-

ship! He gives them at once its measure and motive. "Love one another, *as* I have loved you!" What a love was that! — it reached to the lowliest and humblest,—"Inasmuch as ye did it to the *least* of these, ye did it unto *Me*."

Ah! if such was the Elder Brother's love to His younger brethren, what should the love of these younger brothers be for one another! How humbling that there should be so much that is sadly and strangely unlike the spirit which our blessed Master sought to inculcate alike by precept and example! Individual Christians, why these bitter estrangements, these censorious words, these harsh judgments, this want of kind consideration of the feelings and failings of those who may differ from you? Why are your friendships so often like the summer brook, soon dried? You hope, ere long, to meet in glory. Doubtless, when you enter on that "sabbath of love," many a greeting will be

this, "Alas! my brother, that on earth I did not love thee more!"

Do you see the image of God in a professing believer? It is your duty to love him for the sake of that image. No church, no outward livery, no denominational creed, should prevent your owning and claiming him as a fellow-pilgrim and fellow-heir. It has been said of a portrait, however poor the painting, however unfinished the style, however faulty the touches, however coarse and unseemly the frame, yet if the *likeness* be faithful, we overlook many subordinate defects So it is with the Christian: however plain the exterior, however rough the setting, or even manifold the blemishes still found cleaving to a partially sanctified nature, yet if the Redeemer's *likeness* be feebly and faintly traced there, we should love the copy for the sake of the Divine Original. There may be other bonds of association and intercourse linking spirit with spirit;—family

ties, mental congenialities, intellectual tastes, philanthropic pursuits; but that which ought to take the precedence of all, is the love of God's image in the brethren. What will heaven be but this love perfected—loving Christ, and beloved by those who love Him?

Reader! seek to love *Him* more, and you will love His people more. John had more love than the other disciples. Why? He drank deepest of the love within that bosom on which he delighted to lean. "Walk," then, "in love!" Let it be the very foot-road you tread; let your way to heaven be paved with it. Soon shall we come to look within the portal. Then shall every jarring and dissonant note be merged into the sublime harmonies of "the new heavens and the new earth," and we shall all "see eye to eye!"

11TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Jesus wept."—JOHN XI. 35.

Sympathy. IT is an affecting thing to see a great man in tears! *"Jesus wept!"* It was ever His delight to tread in the footsteps of sorrow;—to heal the broken-hearted;—turning aside from His own path of suffering to "weep with those that weep."

Bethany! That scene, that *word*, is a condensed volume of consolation for yearning and desolate hearts. What a majesty in those tears! He had just before been discoursing on Himself as the Resurrection and the Life;—the next moment He is a Weeping Man by a human grave, melted in anguished sorrow at a bereaved one's side! Think of the funeral at the gate of Nain, reading its lesson to dejected myriads—"Let thy widows trust in me!" Think of the

farewell discourse to His disciples, when, muffling all His own foreseen and anticipated sorrows, He thought only of soothing and mitigating theirs! Think of the affecting pause in that silent procession to Calvary, when He turns round and stills the sobs of those who are tracking His steps with their weeping! Think of that wondrous epitome of human tenderness, just ere His eyes closed in their sleep of agony—in the mightiest crisis of all time—when filial love looked down on an anguished mother, and provided her a son and a home!

Ah, was there ever sympathy like this! Son! Brother! Kinsman! Saviour! all in one! The majesty of Godhead almost lost in the tenderness of the Friend. But so it *was*, and so it *is*. The heart of the new enthroned King beats responsive to the humblest of His sorrow-stricken people; — "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord *carries me on His heart!*" (margin).

Let us "go and do likewise." Let us be ready, like our Lord, to follow the beck of misery,—"to deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper." Sympathy costs but little. Its recompense and return are great, in the priceless consolation it imparts. Few there are who undervalue it. Look at Paul—the weary, jaded prisoner,—chained to a soldier,—recently wrecked,—about to stand before Cæsar. He reached Appii Forum and the Three Taverns dejected and depressed. Brethren come from Rome, a distance of sixty miles, to offer their *sympathy*. The aged man is cheered. His spirit, like Jacob's, "revived." "He thanked God, and took courage!"

Reader! let "this mind"—this holy, Christ-like *habit*—be in you, which was also in your adorable Master. Delight, when opportunity occurs, to frequent the house of mourning,—to bind up the

widow's heart, and to dry the orphan's tears. If you can do nothing else, you can whisper into the ear of disconsolate sorrow, those majestic solaces, which, rising first in the graveyard of Bethany, have sent their undying echoes through the world, and stirred the depths of ten thousand hearts. "Exercise your souls," says Butler, "in a loving sympathy with sorrow in every form. Soothe it, minister to it, succour it, revere it. It is the relic of Christ in the world, an image of the Great Sufferer, a shadow of the cross. It is a holy and venerable thing."

Jesus Himself "*looked* for some to take *pity*, but there was *none*; and for comforters, but He found *none!*" It shows how even *He* valued sympathy, and that, too, in its commonest form of "*pity*," though an ungrateful World denied it.

12TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"The Lord turned and looked upon Peter."—LUKE XXII. 61.

Fidelity in Rebuke. JESUS never spake one unnecessarily harsh or severe word. He had a divine sympathy for the frailties and infirmities of a tried, and suffering, and tempted nature in others. He was forbearing to the ignorant, encouraging to the weak, tender to the penitent, loving to all,—yet how faithful was He as "the Reprover of sin!" Silent under His own wrongs, with what burning invective did He lay bare the Pharisees' masked corruption and hypocrisy! When His Father's name and temple were profaned, how did He sweep, with an avenging hand, the mammon-crowd away, replacing the superscription, "Holiness to the Lord," over the defiled altar!

Nor was it different with His own disciples. With what fidelity, when rebuke was needed, did He administer it: the withering reprimand conveyed, sometimes by an impressive *word* (Matt. xvi. 23); sometimes by a silent *look* (Luke xxii. 61). "Faithful always were the wounds of *this* Friend."

Reader! art thou equally faithful with thy Lord in rebuking evil; not with "the wrath of man, which worketh not the righteousness of God,"—but with a holy jealousy of His glory, feeling, with the sensitive honour of "the good soldier of Jesus Christ," that an affront offered to Him is offered to thyself? The giving of a wise reproof requires much Christian prudence and delicate discretion. It is not by a rash and inconsiderate exposure of failings that we must attempt to reclaim an erring brother. But neither, for the sake of a false peace, must we compromise fidelity; even friendship is too dearly purchased

by winking at sin. Perhaps, when Peter was led to call the Apostle who honestly reproved him, "Our beloved brother Paul," in nothing did he love his rebuker more than for the honest boldness of his Christian reproof. If Paul had, in that crisis of the Church, with a timidity unworthy of him, evaded the ungracious task, what, humanly speaking, might have been the result?

How often does a seasonable reprimand, a faithful caution, save a lifetime of sin and sorrow! How many a deathbed has made the disclosure, "That kind warning of my friend put an arrest on my career of guilt; it altered my whole being; it brought me to the cross, touched my heart, and, by God's grace, saved my soul!" On the other hand, how many have felt, when death has put his impressive seal on some close earthly intimacy, "This friend, or that friend,—I might have spoken a solemn word to him; but now he is no more;

the opportunity is lost, never to be recalled!"

Reader! see that you act not the spiritual coward. When tempted to sit silent when the name of God is slighted or dishonoured, think, *would Jesus have done so?*—would *He* have allowed the oath to go unrebuked—the lie to be uttered unchallenged—the Sabbath with impunity to be profaned? Where there is a natural diffidence which makes you shrink from a more bold and open reproof, remember much may be done to discountenance sin, by the silent holiness of demeanour, which refuses to smile at the unholy allusion or ribald jest. "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" "Speak gently," yet speak faithfully. "Be pitiful—be courteous:" yet "quit you like men, be strong!"

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

13TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"—JOHN XXI. 15.

Gentleness in Rebuke.

No word here of the erring disciple's past faithlessness; his guilty cowardice—*unmentioned;* his base denial—his oaths and curses, and treacherous desertion—all *unmentioned!* The memory of a threefold denial is *suggested*, and no more, by the threefold question of unutterable tenderness, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" When Jesus finds His disciples sleeping at the gate of Gethsemane, He rebukes them; but how is the rebuke disarmed of its poignancy by the merciful apology which is added—"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak!" How different from *their* unkind insinuation regarding *Him*, when "He was asleep" in the vessel on Tiberias,—"Master,

carest thou not that we perish!" The woman of Samaria is full of earthliness, carnality, sectarianism, guilt. Yet how gently the Saviour speaks to her;—how considerately, yet faithfully, He directs the arrow of conviction to that seared and hardened conscience! Truly, "He will not break the bruised reed —He will not quench the smoking flax." By "the *goodness* of God," He would lead to repentance. When others are speaking of merciless violence, He can dismiss the most guilty of profligates with the words, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."

How many have an unholy pleasure in finding a brother in the wrong;—blazing abroad his failings; administering rebuke, not in gentle forbearance and kindly expostulation, but with harsh and impatient severity! How beautifully did Jesus unite intense sensibility to sin, along with tenderest compassion for the sinner; showing in this that "He know-

eth our frame!" Many a scholar needs gentleness in chastisement. The reverse would crush a sensitive spirit, or drive it to despair. Jesus tenderly "considers" the case of those whom He disciplines, "tempering the wind to the shorn lamb." In the picture of the good Shepherd bearing home the wandering sheep, He illustrated, by parable, what He had often and again taught by His own example. No word of needless harshness or upbraiding is uttered to the erring wanderer! Ingratitude is too deeply felt to need reproof! In silent love, "He lays it on His shoulders rejoicing."

Reader! seek to mingle gentleness in all your rebukes. Bear with the infirmities of others; make allowance for constitutional frailties; never say harsh things, if kind things will do as well; do not unnecessarily lacerate with recalling former delinquencies. In reproving another, let us rather feel how

much we need reproof ourselves. "Consider thyself," is a searching Scripture motto for dealing with an erring brother. Remember thy Lord's method of silencing fierce accusation—"Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." Moreover, anger and severity are not the successful means of reclaiming the backslider, or of melting the obdurate. Like the *smooth* stones with which David smote Goliath, *gentle* rebukes are generally the most powerful. The old fable of the traveller and his cloak has a moral here as in other things. The genial sunshine will effect its removal sooner than the rough tempest. It was said of Leighton, that "he rebuked faults so mildly, that they were never repeated, not because the admonished were afraid, but ashamed to do so."

14TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself."—HEB. XII. 3.

Endurance of Contradiction.

WHAT endurance was this! Perfect Truth in the midst of error; perfect Love in the midst of ingratitude and coldness; perfect Rectitude in the midst of perjury, violence, fraud; perfect Constancy in the midst of contumely and desertion; perfect Innocence, confronting every debased form of depravity and guilt; perfect Patience, encountering every species of gross provocation. "Oppressed and afflicted, He opened not His mouth!" "For my love" (in return for my love), "they are mine adversaries; *but*" (see His endurance!—the only species of revenge of which His sinless nature was capable) "*I give myself unto prayer!*" (Ps. cix. 4).

Reader! "let this mind be in you,

which was also in Christ Jesus!" The greatest test of an earthly soldier's courage is *patient endurance!* The noblest trait of the spiritual soldier is the same. "Having done all *to stand.*" "He *endured,* as seeing Him who is invisible!" Beware of the angry recrimination, the hasty ebullition of temper. Amid unkind insinuations—when motives are misrepresented, and reputation assailed; when good deeds are ridiculed, kind intentions coldly thwarted and repulsed, chilling reserve manifested where you expected nothing but friendship,—what a triumph over natural impulse to manifest a spirit of meek endurance!—like a rainbow, radiant with the hues of heaven, resting peacefully amid the storms of derision and "the floods of ungodly men." What an opportunity of magnifying the "sustaining grace of God!" "It is a small thing for me to be judged of you, or of man's judgment; He that judgeth me

is the Lord." "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me." "Blessed is the man that *endureth*." "He that *endureth* to the end, the same shall be saved."

If faithful to our God, we must expect to encounter contradiction in the same form which Jesus did—"the contradiction of *sinners*." It has been well said, "There is no cross of nails and wood erected now for the Christian, but there is one of words and looks which is never taken down." If believers are set as lights in the earth, lamps in the world's darkness, we know that "he that doeth evil *hateth* the light." "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you!"

Weary and faint ones, exposed to the shafts of calumny and scorn because of your fidelity to your God;—encountering, it may be, the coldness and estrangement of those dear to you, who cannot, perhaps, sympathise in the holi-

ness of your walk and the loftiness of your aims, "consider *Him* that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, *lest* ye be weary and faint in your minds!" What is *your* "contradiction" to *His?* Soon your cross, whatever it be, will have an end. "The seat of the scorner" has no place in yonder glorious heaven, where all will be peace—no jarring note to disturb its blissful harmonies! Look forward to the great coronation-day of the Church triumphant,—the day of your Divine Lord's appearing, when motives and aims, now misunderstood, will be vindicated, wrongs redressed, calumnies and aspersions wiped away. Meanwhile, "rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

15TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"I do always those things that please Him."—JOHN VIII. 29.

Pleasing God. WHAT a glorious motto for a man—"*I live for God!*" It is religion's truest definition. It is the essence of angelic bliss—the motive principle of angelic action;—"Ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure." The Lord of angels knew no higher, no *other* motive. It was, during His incarnation, the regulator and directory of His daily being. It supported Him amid the depressing sorrows of His woe-worn path. It upheld Him in their awful termination in the garden and on the cross. For a moment, sinking human nature faltered under the load His God-head sustained; but the thought of "pleasing God" nerved and revived Him. "Not my will, but *Thine* be done."

It is only when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, that this animating desire to "please Him" can exist. In the holy bosom of Jesus, that love reigned paramount, admitting no rival—no competing affection. Though infinitely inferior in degree, it is the same impelling principle which leads His people still to link enjoyment with His service, and which makes consecration to Him of heart and life its own best recompense and reward. "There is a gravitation," says one whose life was the holy echo of his words, "in the moral as in the physical world. When love to God is habitually in the ascendant, or occupying the place of will, it gathers round it all the other desires of the soul as satellites, and whirls them along with it in its orbit round the centre of attraction" (*Hewitson's Life*). Till the heart, then, be changed, the believer cannot have "this testimony that he *pleases God*." The world, self,

sin—these be the gods of the unregenerate soul. And even *when* changed, alas that there should be so many ebbings and flowings in our tide of devotedness! Jesus could say, I do *always* those things that please the Father." Glory to God burned within His bosom like a living fire. "Many waters could not quench it." His were no fitful and inconstant frames and feelings, but the persistent habit of a holy life, which had the one end in view, from which it never diverged or deviated.

Let it be so, in some lowly measure, with us. Let God's service not be the mere livery of high days,—of set times and seasons; but, like the alabaster box of ointment, let us ever be giving forth the fragrant perfume of holiness. Even when the shadows of trial are falling around us, let us "pass through the cloud" with the sustaining motive—"All my wish, O God, is to please and glorify Thee! By giving or taking—by smit-

ing or healing—by the sweet cup or the bitter—'Father, glorify thy name!'" "I don't want to be weary of God's dealings with me," said Bickersteth, on his death-bed; "I want to glorify Jesus in them, and to find Him more precious." Do I shrink from trials—duties—crosses—because involving hardships and self-denial, or because frowned on by the world? Let the thought of God's approving countenance be enough. Let me dread no censure, if conscious of acting in accordance with *His* will. Let the Apostle's monitory word determine many a perplexing path—"If I please men, I am not the servant of Christ."

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

16TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Being grieved for the hardness of their hearts."—MARK III. 5.

Grief at Sin.

ON this one occasion only is the expression used with reference to Jesus—(what intensity of emotion does it denote, spoken of a sinless nature!)—"He looked round on them *with anger!*" Never did He grieve for Himself. His intensest sorrows were reserved for those who were tampering with their own souls, and dishonouring His God. The continual spectacle of moral evil, thrust on the gaze of spotless purity, made His earthly history one consecutive history of grief, —one perpetual "cross and passion."

Sympathy, doubtless, for the world's myriad mourners, had its own share in the tears shed at the grave of Bethany (the bereaved could not part with so precious a tribute in their hours of sad-

ness), but a far more impressive cause was one undiscerned by the weeping sisters and sorrowing crowd;—His knowledge of the deep and obdurate impenitence of those who were about to gaze on the mightiest of miracles, only to "despise, and wonder, and perish." "*Jesus wept!*"—but His profoundest anguish was over resisted grace, abused privileges, scorned mercy. It was the Divine Artificer mourning over His shattered handiwork;—the Almighty Creator weeping over His ruined world;—God, the God-man, "grieving" over the temple of the soul, a humiliating wreck of what once was made "after His own image!"

Can we sympathize in any respect with such exalted tears? Do we mourn for sin, our *own* sin—the deep insult which it inflicts on God—the ruinous consequences it entails on ourselves? Do we grieve at sin in *others?* Do we know anything of "vexing our souls,"

like righteous Lot, "from day to day," with the world's "unlawful deeds,"—the stupid hardness and obduracy of the depraved heart, which resists alike the appliances of wrath and love, judgment and mercy? Ah! it is easy, in general terms, to condemn vice, and to utter harsh, severe, and cutting denunciations on the guilty: it is easy to pass uncharitable comments on the inconsistencies or follies of others; but to "*grieve*" as our Lord did, is a different thing;—to mourn over the hardness of heart, and yet to have the burning desire to teach it better things;—to hate, as He did, the *sin*, but, like Him also, to love the *sinner!*

Reader! look specially to your own spirit. In one respect, the example of Jesus falls short of your case. He had no sin of His own to mourn over. He could only commiserate others. *Your* intensest grief must begin with *yourself.* Like the watchful Levite of old, be a guardian at the temple-gates of your

own soul. Whatever be your besetting iniquity, your constitutional bias to sin, seek to guard it with wakeful vigilance. Grieve at the thought of incurring one passing shadow of displeasure from so kind and compassionate a Saviour. Let this be a holy preservative in your every hour of temptation, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Grieve for a perishing world — a groaning creation fettered and chained in unwilling "subjection to vanity." Do what you can, by effort, by prayer to hasten on the hour of jubilee, when its ashy robes of sin and sorrow shall be laid aside, and, attired in the "beauties of holiness," it shall exult in "the glorious liberty of the sons of God!"

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

17TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet."—JOHN XIII. 4, 5.

Humility. WHAT a matchless picture of humility! At the very moment when His throne was in view;—angel-anthems floating in His ear;—the hour come "when He was to depart out of this world;"—possessing a lofty consciousness of His peerless dignity, that "He came *from* God and went *to* God;" —THEN "Jesus took a towel, and girded Himself, and began to wash the disciples' feet!" All heaven was ready at that moment to cast their combined crowns at His feet. But the High and the Lofty One inhabiting eternity is on earth "as one that serveth!" "That *infinite stoop!* it sinks all creature humiliation to nothing, and renders

it impossible for a creature to *humble* himself."—(*Evans.*)

Humility follows Him, from His unhonoured birthplace to His borrowed grave. It throws a subdued splendour over all He did. "The poor in spirit," —the "mourner,"—the "meek,"—claim His first beatitudes. He was severe only to one class—those who looked down upon others. However He is employed; whether performing His works of miraculous power, or receiving angel-visitants, or taking little children in His arms, He stands forth "clothed with humility." Nay, this humility becomes more conspicuous as He draws nearer glory. Before His death, He calls His disciples "*Friends;*" subsequently, it is "*Brethren,*" "*Children.*" How sad the contrast between the Master and His disciples! Two hours had not elapsed after He washed their feet, when "there was a strife among them which should be the greatest!"

Let the mental image of that lowly Redeemer be ever bending over us. His example may well speak in silent impressiveness, bringing us down from our pedestal of pride. There surely can be no labour of love too humiliating when *He* stooped so low. Let us be content to take the humblest place;—not envious of the success or exaltation of another; not, "like Diotrephes, loving pre-eminence;" but willing to be thought little of; saying with the Baptist, with our eye on our Lord, "He must increase, but I must decrease!"

How much we have cause to be humble for!—the constant cleaving of defilement to our souls; and even what is partially good in us, how mixed with imperfection, self-seeking, arrogance, vain-glory! A proud Christian is a contradiction in terms. The Seraphim of old (type of the Christian Church, and of believers) had six wings—*two* were for errands of love, but "with *four*

he *covered* himself!" It has been beautifully said, "You lie nearest the River of Life when you *bend* to it; you cannot drink, but as you *stoop*." The corn of the field, as it ripens, bows its head; so, the Christian, as he ripens in the divine life, bends in this lowly grace. Christ speaks of His people as "lilies"—they are "lilies of *the Valley*," they can only grow in the shade!

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God." "Go" with what Rutherford calls "a low sail." It is the livery of your blessed Master; the family badge —the family likeness. "With this man will I dwell, even with him that is *humble*." Yes, the humble, sanctified heart is God's *second Heaven!*

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

18TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter."—ISA. LIII. 7.

Patience. How great was the *patience* of Jesus! Even among His own disciples, how forbearingly He endured their blindness, their misconceptions and hardness of heart! Philip had been for three years with Him, yet he had "not known Him!"—all that time he had remained in strange and culpable ignorance of his Lord's dignity and glory. See how tenderly Jesus bears with him;—giving him nothing in reply for his confession of ignorance but unparalleled promises of grace! Peter, the honoured and trusted, becomes a renegade and a coward. Justly might his dishonoured Lord, stung with such unrequited love, have cut the unworthy cumberer down. But He spares him, bears with him, gently rebukes him, and loves him more than

ever! See the Divine Sufferer in the terminating scenes of His own ignominy and woe. How patient!—"As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." In these awful moments, outraged Omnipotence might have summoned twelve legions of angels and put into the hand of each a vial of wrath. But He submits in meek, majestic silence. Verily, in *Him* "patience had her *perfect* work!"

Think of this same patience with His Church and people since He ascended to glory. The years upon years He has borne with their perverse resistance of His grace, their treacherous ingratitude, their wayward wanderings, their hardness of heart and contempt of His holy word. Yet, behold the forbearing love of this Saviour God! His hand of mercy is "stretched out still!"

Child of God! art thou now undergoing some bitter trial? The ways of Providence, it may be, all mystery; no

footprints of love traceable in the chequered path; no light in the clouds above; no ray in the dark future. *Be patient!* "The Lord is good to them that *wait* for Him." "They that *wait* on the Lord shall renew their strength!" Or hast thou been long tossed on some bed of sickness—days of pain and nights of weariness appointed thee? *Be patient!* "I trust this groaning," said a suffering saint, "is not murmuring." God, by this very affliction, is nurturing within thee this beauteous grace which shone so conspicuously in the character of thy dear Lord. With Him it was a lovely *habit* of the soul. With thee, the "tribulation" which worketh "patience" is needful discipline. "It is *good* for a man that he should both hope and quietly *wait* for the salvation of God." Art thou suffering some unmerited wrong or unkindness,—exposed to harsh and wounding accusations, hard for flesh and blood to bear? *Be patient!* Beware of hasti-

ness of speech or temper; remember how much evil may be done by a few inconsiderate words "spoken unadvisedly with the lip." Think of Jesus standing before a human tribunal, in the silent submissiveness of conscious innocence and integrity. Leave thy cause with God. Let this be the only form of thy complaint, "O God, I am oppressed; undertake Thou for me!"

"In patience," then, "possess ye your souls." Let it not be a grace for peculiar seasons, called forth on peculiar exigencies; but an habitual frame manifested in the calm serenity of a daily walk;—placidity amid the little fretting annoyances of every-day life—a fixed purpose of the heart to wait upon God, and cast its every burden upon Him.

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

19TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do."
—JOHN XIV. 31.

Subjection. JESUS, as God-man, had omnipotence slumbering in His arm. He had the hoarded treasures of eternity in His grasp. He had only to "speak, and it was done." But as an Example to His people, His whole life on earth was one impressive act of subordination and dependence. At Nazareth He was "subject to His parents." There He remained in studied obscurity, occupying for thirty years a lowly hut, willing to continue in a state of seclusion, till the Father's summons called Him to His appointed work.

At His baptism, sinless Himself, He gives this reason for receiving a sinner's rite at a sinner's hands—"Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh Me to fulfil all righteousness." The same

beautiful spirit of filial *subjection* shines conspicuous amid His acts of stupendous power. "Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me; and I know that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Even among His own disciples His language is, "I am among you as He that serveth." With an act of submission He closed His pilgrimage and work of love:—"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

What an example to us, in all this, is our beloved Lord! Surely, if *He*, "God only wise"—the Self-existent One, to whom "all power was committed,"—the Sinless One, never liable to err, on whom "the Spirit was poured without measure"—if *He* manifested such habitual dependence on His heavenly Father, how earnestly ought *we*, weak, erring, fallible creatures, to seek to live every

hour—every moment—as pensioners on God's grace and love, following in all things His directing hand! As the servant has his eyes on his master, or the child on its parent, "so should our eyes be on the Lord our God." Howsoever He speaks, be it ours with all docility to follow the voice, endorsing every utterance of providence, and every precept of Scripture, with our Lord's own words, "*This is the Father's will!*"

Beware of self-dependence. The first step in spiritual declension is this:—"Let him that *thinketh he standeth!*" The secret of real strength is this:—"*Kept* by the *power of God!*"

How it sweetens all our blessings, and alleviates all our sorrows, to regard both as emanations from a loving Father's hand. Even if we should be like the disciples of old, "*constrained*" to go into the ship; if all should be darkness and tempest,—frowning providences,—"the wind contrary;" how blessed to feel that

in embarking on the unquiet element, "the Lord has bidden us!" Paul could not speak even of taking an earthly journey, without the parenthesis, ("if the Lord will.") How many trials, and sorrows, and *sins*, would it save us, if the same were the habitual regulator of our daily life! It would lead to calm contentment with our lot, hushing every disquieting suggestion with the thought that that lot, with all that is apparently adverse in it, was *ordained* for us. It would teach us not to be aspiring after *great* things, but humbly to wait the will and purposes of a wise Provider; not to go *before* our Heavenly Guide, but to *follow* Him, saying, in meek subjection, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me .... my soul is even as a weaned child!"

20TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again."—1 PETER II. 23.

Not Retaliating.

WHAT a common dictate of the fallen and regenerate heart to resent and recriminate! How alien to natural feeling to answer cutting taunts, and meet unmerited wrong, with the Divine method which the Gospel prescribes—"Overcome evil with good!" It was in the closing scenes of the Saviour's humiliation, when, silent and unresenting, He stood "dumb before His shearers," that this beautiful feature in His character was most wondrously manifested; but it beams forth also for our imitation in the ordinary and less prominent incidents of His pilgrimage.

When He met Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, He found him clinging to an unreasonable prejudice—"Can any good

thing come out of Nazareth?" The severe remark is allowed to pass unnoticed. Overlooking the unkind insinuation, the Saviour fixes on the favourable feature of his character, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" After His resurrection, He appears to His disciples. They were cowering in shame, half afraid to confront the glance of injured goodness. He breathes on them, and says, "Peace be unto you!" Peter was the one of all the rest who had most reason to dread estranged looks and upbraiding words; but a special message is sent to reassure that trembling spirit that there was no alienation in the unresentful Heart he had so deeply wounded;—"Go and tell the disciples . . . and *Peter!*" Even when Judas first revealed himself to his Lord as the betrayer, we believe it was not in bitter irony or rebuke, but in the fulness of pitying tenderness, that Jesus addressed him, "Friend, wherefore art

thou come?" Tears and prayers were His only revenge on the city and scene of His murder. "Beginning at Jerusalem," was the closing illustration of a spirit "not of this world"—a significant parting testimony that in the bosom that uttered it, retaliation had no place.

More than one of the disciples seem to have imbibed much of this "mind" of their Lord. "We owe St Paul," says Augustine, "to the death of Stephen;" —"they stoned Stephen .... and he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord! lay not this sin to their charge."

Take another example: The great Apostle of the Gentiles felt himself under a painful necessity faithfully to rebuke Peter in presence of the whole Church. He had *recorded* that rebuke, too, in one of his epistles. It was thus to be handed down to every age as a permanent and humiliating evidence of the wavering inconstancy of his fellow-labourer. Peter,

doubtless, must have felt acutely the severity of the chastisement. Does he resent it? He, too, puts on record, long after, in one of his own epistles, a sentence regarding his Rebuker, but it is this—"Our *beloved brother* Paul!"

Reader! when tempted to utter the harsh word, or give the cutting or hasty answer, seek to check yourself with the question, "Is this the reply my Saviour would have given?" If your fellow-men should prove unkind, inconsiderate, ungrateful, be it yours to refer the cause to God. Speak of the faults of others only in prayer; manifesting more sorrow for the sin of the censorious and unkind, than for the evil inflicted on yourselves.—*Retaliate!* No such word should have a place in the Christian's vocabulary. *Retaliate!* If I cherish such a spirit towards my brother, how can I meet that brother in heaven?—"But ye have not so learned Christ."

21ST MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"And He bearing His cross."—JOHN XIX. 17.

Bearing the Cross.

WHEN did Jesus bear the cross? Not that moment alone, surely, when the bitter tree was placed on His shoulders, on the way to Golgotha. Its vision may be said to have risen before Him in His infant dreams in Bethlehem's cradle; there, rather, its reality began; and He ceased not to carry it, till His work was finished, and the victory won! A *cloud* of old, hovered over the mercy-seat in the tabernacle and temple. So it was, in another sense, with the Great Antitype —the living Mercy-Seat,—He had ever a cloud of woe hanging over Him. "He *carried* our sorrows."

Reader! dwell much and often under the shadow of your Lord's cross, and it will lead you to think lightly of your

own! If *He* gave utterance to not one murmuring word, canst *thou* complain? "If we were deeper students of His bitter anguish, we should think less of the ripplings of our waves, amidst His horrible tempest."—(*Evans.*) The saint's cross assumes many and diverse shapes. Sometimes it is the bitter trial,—the crushing pang of bereavement,—desolate households, and aching hearts. Sometimes it is the crucifixion of sin, the determined battling with "lusts which war against the soul." Sometimes it is the resistance of the evil maxims and practices of a lying world;—vindicating the honour of Christ, in the midst, it may be, of taunt, and obloquy, and shame. And as there are different crosses, so there are different ways of bearing them. To some, God says, 'Put your shoulder to the burden; lift it up, and bear it on; work, and toil, and *labour!* To others, He says, 'Be still; bear it and *suffer!*'

Believer! thy cross may be hard to endure; it may involve deep struggles—tears by day, watchings by night; bear it meekly, patiently, justifying God's wisdom in laying it on. Rejoice in the assurance that He gives not one atom more of earthly trial than He sees to be really needful; not one redundant thorn pierces your feet. In the very bearing of the cross for *His* sake, there are mighty compensations. What new views of your Saviour's love! His truth, His promises, His sustaining grace, His sufferings, His glory! What new filial nearness; increased delight in prayer; an inner sunshine when it is darkest without. The waves cover you, but underneath them all are "the everlasting arms!"

Do not desire a situation *without* crosses. Be not over-anxious about "smooth paths;"—leaving your God, as Orpah did Naomi, just when the cross requires to be carried. Immoderate

earthly enjoyments,—unbroken earthly prosperity, — write upon these "*Beware!*" You may live to see them become your greatest trials.

Remember the old saying, "No cross, no crown." The sun of the saint's life generally struggles through "weeping clouds." One of the loveliest passages of Scripture is that in which the portals of heaven being opened, we overhear this dialogue between two ransomed ones— "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, *These are they which came out of great tribulation!*"

22ND MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up."—JOHN II. 17.

Holy Zeal. "ZEAL is a principle; enthusiasm is a feeling. The one is the spark of a sanguine temperament and overheated imagination. The other, a sacred flame, kindled at God's altar, and burning in God's shrine."—(*Vaughan.*) Such was the holy, heavenly zeal of our Great Exemplar! His were no transient outbursts of ardour, which time cooled, and difficulties impeded. His life was one indignant protest against sin;—one ceaseless current of undying love for souls, which all the malignity of foes, and unkindness of friends, could not for one moment divert from its course. Even when He rises from the dead, and we imagine His work at an end, His zeal only meditates fresh deeds of love. "Still His heart

and His care," says Goodwin, "is upon doing more. Having now despatched that great work on earth, He sends His disciples word that He is hastening to heaven as fast as He can, to do another" (John xx. 17).

Reader! do you know anything of this zeal, which "many waters could not quench?" See that, like your Lord's, it be steady, sober, consistent, undeviating. How many are, like the children of Ephraim, "carrying bows,"—all zealous when zeal demands no sacrifice, but "turning their backs in the day of battle!" Others "running well" for a time, but gradually "hindered," through the benumbing influences of worldliness, selfishness, and sin.—Two disciples, apparently equally devoted and zealous, send through Paul, in one of his epistles, a conjoint Christian salutation — "Luke and Demas greet you." A few years afterwards, thus he writes from his Roman dungeon— "Only *Luke* is with me," "*Demas* hath

forsaken me, having loved this present world!"

While zeal is commendable, remember the Apostle's qualification, "It is good to be zealously affected always in a *good* thing." There is in these days much base coin current, *called* "zeal," which bears not the image and superscription of Jesus. There is zeal for church-membership; zeal for party creeds and dogmas; zeal for figments and non-essentials. "From such turn aside." Your Lord stamped with His example and approval no such counterfeits. *His* zeal was ever brought to bear on two objects, and two objects alone—*the glory of God* and *the good of man.* Be it so with *you.* Enter, first of all (as He did the earthly temple), the sanctuary of *your own heart*, with "the scourge of small cords." Drive out every unhallowed intruder there. Do not suffer yourself to be deceived. Others may call such jealous searchings of spirit "sanctimoni-

ousness" and "enthusiasm." But remember, to be *almost saved,* is to be *altogether lost!*—to be zealous about every thing but "the one thing needful," is an insult to God and your everlasting interests!

Have a zeal for *others.* Dying myriads are around you. As a member of the Christian priesthood, it becomes you to rush in with your censer and incense between the living and the dead, "that the plague may be stayed!"

Be it yours to say, "Blessed Jesus! I am *Thine;*—Thine only;—Thine wholly;—Thine for ever! I am willing to follow Thee, and (if need be) to *suffer* for Thee. I am ready at Thy bidding to leave the homestead in the valley, and to face the cutting blasts of the mountain. Take me—use me for Thy glory. 'Lord! what wilt Thou have me to do?'"

23RD MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Who went about doing good."—ACTS x. 38.

Benevolence. "CHRIST'S great end," says Richard Baxter, "was to save men from their *sins;* but He delighted to save them from their *sorrows.*" His heart bled for human misery. Benevolence brought Him from heaven; benevolence followed His steps wherever He went on earth. The journeys of the Divine Philanthropist were marked by tears of thankfulness and breathings of grateful love. The helpless, the blind, the lame, the desolate, rejoiced at the sound of His footfall. Truly might it be said of Him, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me" (Job xxix. 11). All suffering hearts were a magnet to Jesus. It was not more His prerogative than His happiness to turn tears

into smiles. One of the few pleasures which on earth gladdened the spirit of the "Man of Sorrows" was the pleasure of *doing good*—soothing grief, and alleviating misery. Next to the joy of the widow of Nain when her son was restored, was the joy in the bosom of the Divine Restorer! He often went out of His way to be kind. A journey was not grudged, even if *one* aching spirit were to be soothed (Mark v. 1; John iv. 4, 5). Nor were His kindnesses dispensed through the intervention of others. They were all personal acts. His own hand healed. His own voice spake. His own footsteps lingered on the threshold of bereavement, or at the precincts of the tomb. Ah! had the princes of this world known the loving-tenderness and unselfishness of *that* heart, "they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory!"

Reader! do you know anything of such active benevolence? Have you never felt the *luxury* of doing good?

Have you never felt, that in making *others* happy, you make *yourself* so? that, by a great law of your being, enunciated by the Divine Patron and Pattern of Benevolence, "It is more blessed to give than to receive?" Has God enriched you with this world's goods? Seek to view yourself as a consecrated medium for dispensing them to others. Beware alike of penurious hoarding and selfish extravagance. How sad the case of those whose lot God has made thus to abound with temporal mercies, who have gone to the grave unconscious of diminishing one drop of human misery, or making one of the world's myriad aching hearts happier!—How the example of *Jesus* rebukes the cold and calculating kindnesses—the mite-like offerings of many even of His own people! "whose libation is not like His, from the brim of an overflowing cup, but from the bottom—from the *dregs!*"

You may have little to give. Your

sphere and means may be alike limited. But remember God can be as much glorified by the trifle saved from the earnings of poverty, as by the splendid benefaction from the lap of plenty. "The Lord loveth a *cheerful* giver."

The nobler part of Christian benevolence is not vast largesses, munificent pecuniary sacrifices. "*He went about* doing good." The merciful visit,—the friendly word,—the look of sympathy,—the cup of cold water,—the little unostentatious service,—the giving without thought or hope of recompense,—the kindly "considering the poor"—anticipating their wants—studying their comforts;—these are what God values and loves. They are "loans" to Himself—tributary streams to "the river of *His* pleasure;"—they will be acknowledged at last as such—"Ye did it unto *Me*."

24TH MORNING

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Jesus saith unto him, Get thee hence, Satan."—MATT. IV. 10.

Firmness in Temptation.

THERE is an awful intensity of meaning in the words, as applied to Jesus, "He *suffered*, being tempted!" Though incapable of sin, there was, in the refined sensibilities of His holy nature, that which made temptation unspeakably fearful. What must it have been to confront the Arch-traitor?—to stand face to face with the foe of His throne, and His universe? But the "prince of this world" came, and found "nothing in Him." Billow after billow of Satanic violence spent their fury, in vain, on the Living Rock!

Reader, you have still the same malignant enemy to contend with; assailing you in a thousand insidious forms; marvellously adapting his assaults to your

circumstances, your temperament, your mental bias, your master passion. There is no place where "Satan's seat" is not; "the whole world lieth in the Wicked one."—(1 John v. 19.) He has his whispers for the ear of childhood; hoary age is not inaccessible to his wiles. "*All this will I give thee*"—is still his bribe to deny Jesus and to "mind earthly things." He will meet you in the crowd; he will follow you to the solitude; his is a sleepless vigilance!

Are you bold in repelling him as your Master was? Are you ready with the retort to every foul suggestion, "Get thee hence, Satan"? Cultivate a tender sensitiveness about sin. The finest barometers are the most sensitive. Whatever be your besetting frailty—whatever bitter or baleful passion you are conscious aspires to the mastery—watch it, crucify it, "nail it to your Lord's cross." *You* may despise "the day of

small things"—the Great Adversary does *not*. He knows the power of *littles;* —that little by little consumes and eats out the vigour of the soul. And once the retrograde movement in the spiritual life begins, who can predict where it may end? —the going on "from weakness to weakness," instead of "from strength to strength." Make no compromises; never join in the ungodly amusement, or venture on the questionable path, with the plea, "It does me no harm." The Israelites, on entering Canaan, instead of obeying the Divine injunction of extirpating their enemies, made a hollow truce with them. —What was the result? Years upon years of tedious warfare. "They were scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes!" It is quaintly but truthfully said by an old writer, "The candle will never burn clear, while there is a *thief* in it. Sin indulged, in the conscience, is like Jonah in the ship, which causeth such a tempest, that the con-

science is like a troubled sea, whose waters cannot rest."—(*Thomas Brooks.*)

"Keep," then, "thy heart with all diligence," or (as it is in the forcible original Hebrew), "keep thy heart *above all keeping*," "for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv. 23). Let this ever be our preservative against temptation, "How would *Jesus* have acted here? would *He* not have recoiled, like the sensitive plant, from the remotest contact with sin? Can *I* think of dishonouring Him by tampering with His enemy;—incurring from His own lips the bitter reflection of injured love, 'I am wounded in the house of my friends'?"

He tells us the secret of our preservation and safety, "Simon! Simon! Satan hath desired to have thee, that he might sift thee as wheat; *but I* have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not!"

25TH MORNING

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"This man receiveth sinners."—LUKE XV. 2.

Receiving Sinners.

THE ironical taunt of proud and censorious Pharisees formed the glory of Him who came, "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Publicans and outcasts; those covered with a deeper than any bodily leprosy—laid bare their wounds to the "Great Physician;" and as conscious guilt and timid penitence crept abashed and imploring to His feet, they found nothing but a forgiving and a gracious welcome!

"His ways" were not as "man's ways." The "watchmen," in the Canticles, "smote" the disconsolate one seeking her lost Lord; they tore off her veil, mocking with chilling unkindness her anguished tears. Not so "the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls." "*This*

man *receiveth* sinners!" See at Nicodemus, stealing under the shadows of night to elude observation, type of the thousand thousand who in every age have gone trembling in their night of sin and sorrow to this Heavenly Friend. Does Jesus punish his timidity by shutting the door against him, spurning him from His presence?—"He will not break the bruised reed, He will not quench the smoking flax!"

And He is still the same. He who arrested a persecutor in his blasphemies, and tuned the lips of an expiring felon with faith and love, is at this hour standing with all the garnered treasures of Redemption in His hand, proclaiming, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out!"

Are we from this to think lightly of sin? or by example and conduct to palliate and overlook its enormity? Not so; sin, *as* sin, can never be sufficiently stamped with the brand of reprobation.

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Jesus *did* so, Jesus *does* so! Ah! if we had within us His unconquerable love of souls,—His yearning desire for the everlasting happiness of sinners, we should be more frequently in earnest expostulation and affectionate appeal with those who have hitherto got no other than harsh thoughts and repulsive words. If this "mind" really were in us "which was also in Him," we should more frequently ask ourselves, "Have I done all I *might* have done to pluck this brand from the burning? Have I remembered what grace *has* wrought, what grace *can* do?"

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins!"

26TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Neither was guile found in His mouth."—1 PET. II. 22.

Guilelessness. How rare, and all the more beautiful because of its rarity, is a purely *guileless* spirit! A crystalline medium through which the transparent light of Heaven comes and goes; open, candid, just, honourable, sincere; scorning every unfair dealing, every hollow pretension, every narrow prejudice. Wherever such characters exist, they are like "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Such, in all the loveliness of sinless perfection, was the Son of God! His guilelessness shining the more conspicuously amid the artful and malignant subtlety alike of men and devils. Passing by manifold instances in the course of His ministry, look at its manifestation, as the hour of His death approached.

When, on the night of His apprehension, He confronts the assassin band, and in meek majesty puts the question, "Whom seek ye?" they say to Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." In guileless innocence, He replies, "I am He!" "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" asks Pilate, a few hours after. An evasive answer might again have purchased immunity from suffering and indignity: but once more the lips which scorned the semblance of evasion reply, "Thou sayest!"

How He loved the same spirit in His people! "Behold," said He, of Nathanael, "an Israelite indeed, in whom is *no guile*." That upright man had, we may suppose, been day after day kneeling in prayer under his fig-tree, with an open and candid spirit—

> "Musing on the law he taught,
> And waiting for the Lord he loved."

See how the Saviour honoured him; setting His own divine seal on the loveli-

ness of this same spirit! Take one other example: when the startling, saddening announcement is made to the disciples, "One of you shall betray me;" they do not accuse one another; they attempt to throw no suspicion on Judas; each in trembling apprehension suspects only his own treacherous heart, "Lord, is it I?"

How much of a different "mind" is there abroad! In the school of the world (this "*painted* world") how much is there of what is called "policy," double-dealing;—accomplishing its ends by tortuous means; outward artificial polish, often only a cloak for baseness and selfishness!—in the daily interchange of business, one seeking to overreach the other by wily arts;—sacrificing principle for temporal advantage. There is nothing so derogatory to religion as aught allied to such a spirit among Christ's people—any such blots on the "living epistles." "Ye are the light

of the world." That world is a quick observer. It is sharp to detect inconsistencies,—slow to forget them. The true Christian has been likened to an *anagram*—you ought to be able to read him up and down, every way!

Be all reality, no counterfeit. Do not pass for current coin what is base alloy. Let transparent honour and sincerity regulate all your dealings; despise all meanness; avoid the sinister motive, the underhand dealing; aim at that unswerving love of truth that would scorn to stoop to base compliances and unworthy equivocations; live more under the power of the purifying and ennobling influences of the gospel. Take its golden rule as the matchless directory for the daily transactions of life—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

27TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."—JOHN IX. 4.

Activity in Duty. How constant and unremitting was Jesus in the service of His Heavenly Father! "He rose a great while before day;"—and when His secret communion was over, His public work began. It mattered not to Him where He was: whether on the bosom of the deep, or a mountain slope,—in the desert, or at a well-side,—the "gracious words" ever "proceeded out of His mouth." We find, on one touching occasion, exhausted nature sinking, after a day of unremitting duty;—in crossing in a vessel the Lake of Tiberias,—"*He fell asleep!*" (Matt. viii.) He redeemed every precious moment; His words to the Pharisee seem a *formula* for all, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto *thee!*"

Oh, how our most unceasing activities pale into nothing before such an example as this! Would that we could remember that each of us has some great mission to perform for God;—that religion is not a thing of dreamy sentimentalism, but of energetic practical action; moreover, that no trade, no profession, no position, however high or however humble in the scale of society, can disqualify for this life of Christian activity and usefulness! Who were the Writers in the Bible? We have among them a King—a Lawgiver—a Herdsman—a Publican—a Physician! Nor is it to high spheres, or to great services only, that God looks. The widow's mite and Mary's "alabaster box of ointment" are recorded as examples for imitation by the Holy Ghost, while many more munificent deeds are passed by unrecorded. We believe that God says, regarding the attempt of many a humble Christian to serve Him by active duty, "I saw that effort, that *feeble*

effort, to serve and glorify Me; it was the very *feebleness* of it I loved!"

Did it never strike you, notwithstanding the *dignity* of Christ, and the *activity* of Christ, how little success comparatively He met with in His public work? We read of no *numerous* conversions; no Pentecostal revivals in the course of His ministry. May not this well encourage in the absence of great outward results? He sets up no higher standard than this —"She hath done what she could." An artist may be *great* in painting a peasant as well as a king—*it is the way he does it.* Yes, and if laid aside from the *activities* of the Christian life, we can equally glorify God by *passive endurance.* "Who am I," said Luther, when he witnessed the patience of a great sufferer, "who am I? a wordy preacher in comparison with this great doer."

Reader! forget not the motive of our motto verse, "*The night cometh!*" Soon our tale shall be told; our little day is

flitting fast, the shadows of night are falling. "Our span length of time," as Rutherford says, "will come to an inch." What if the eleventh hour should strike after having been "all the day *idle*"? a long lifetime of opportunities suffered to pass unemployed and unimproved, and absolutely *nothing* done for God! a judgment-day come—our golden moments squandered—our talents untraded on—our work unfinished,—met at the bar of Heaven with the withering repulse, "Inasmuch as ye did it *not*." "The time we have lost," says Richard Baxter, "cannot be recalled; should we not then redeem and improve the little that remains? If a traveller sleep or trifle most of the day, he must travel so much the faster in the evening, or fall short of his journey's end."

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

28TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"But committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously."—1 PETER II. 23.

Committing our way to God.

WITH what perfect and entire confidingness did Jesus commit Himself to His Heavenly Father's guidance! He loved to call Him, "My Father!" There was music in that name, which enabled Him to face the most trying hour, and to drink the most bitter cup. The scoffing taunt arose at the scene of crucifixion, "He trusted in God that He would deliver Him, let Him deliver Him!" It failed to shake, for one moment, His unswerving confidence, even when the sensible tokens of the Divine presence were withdrawn; the realised consciousness of the Father's abiding love sustained Him still;—"My God! my God!"

How many a perplexity should we save ourselves, by thus implicitly "com-

mitting ourselves," as He did, to "the Righteous Judge." In seasons of darkness and trouble—when our way is shut up with thorns, to lift the confiding eye of faith to Him, and say, "I am oppressed, undertake for me!" How blessed to feel that He directs all that befalls us; that no contingencies can frustrate His plans; that the way He leads us is not only *a* "right way,"—but, with all its briers and thorns,—its tears and trials,—it is *the* right way!

The result of such an habitual staying ourselves on the Lord, will be a deep, abiding *peace*;—any ripple will only be on the surface—no more. It is the *bosom* of the ocean alone which the storm ruffles; all beneath is a serene, settled calm. So "Thou wilt keep him, O God, in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on *Thee!*"

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." I shall be content alike with what He appoints or withholds. I *can-*

not wrong that love with one shadow of suspicion! I have His own plighted promise of unchanging faithfulness,—that "all things work together for good to them that love Him!" Often there are earthly sorrows hard to bear;—the unkind accusation, when it was least merited or expected;—the estrangement of tried and trusted friends; the failure of cherished hopes; favourite schemes broken up, plans of usefulness demolished, the gourd breeding its own worm and withering. Commit thy cause and thy way to God! We little know what tenderness there is in the blast of the rough wind; what "needs be" are folded under the wings of the storm! "All is well," because *all* is from *Him*. "Events are God's," says Rutherford; "let Him sit at His own helm, that moderateth all."

Christian! look back on your chequered path. How wondrously has He threaded you through the mazy way—disappoint-

ing your fears, realizing your hopes! Are evils looming through the mists of the future? Do not, by anticipating the trials of to-morrow, aggravate those of to-day. Leave the morrow with Him, who has promised, by "casting all your care on Him," to care for you. No affliction will be sent greater than you can bear. His voice will be heard stealing from the bosom of the threatening cloud, "Be still, and know that I am God!"

"*My Father!*" With such a word, you can stretch out your neck for any yoke. As with Israel of old, He will make those very waves that may now be so threatening, a fenced wall on every side. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." "In *all* thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths!"

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

29TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"That they all may be one."—JOHN XVII. 21.

Love of Unity. SURELY there is nothing for which Christian churches have such cause to hang their harps on the willows, as the extent to which the Shibboleth of party is heard in the camp of the faithful;—sectarianism rearing its "untempered walls" within the Temple gates!

How different "the mind of Jesus!" Sent "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," He was never found disowning "*other* sheep not of that fold." "Them also will I bring," was an assertion continually illustrated by His deeds. Take one example: The woman of Samaria revealed what, alas! is too common in the world—a total absence of all real religion, along with an ardent zeal for her sect. She was living in open sin;

yet she was all alive to the nice distinction between a Jew and a Samaritan—between Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion;—"How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" Did Jesus sanction or reciprocate her sectarianism?—did He leave her bigotry unrebuked? Hear His reply—"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of *Him*, and *He* would have given thee!" *He* would have allowed no such narrow-minded exclusiveness to have interfered with the interchange of kindly civilities with a stranger. Nay, He would have given thee better than all,—the "living water" which "springeth up to everlasting life!"

How sad, when the enemy is "coming in like a flood"—the ranks of Popery and infidelity linked in fatal and formidable confederacy—that the soldiers of Christ are forced to meet the assault

with standards soiled and mutilated by internal feuds! "Uniformity" there *may* not be, but "unity," in the true sense of the word, there *ought* to be. We may be clad in different livery, but let us stand side by side, and rank by rank, fighting the battles of our Lord. We may be different branches of the seven golden candlesticks, varying and diversified in outward form and workmanship; but let us combine in "showing forth the praises of Him" who recognizes as the one true "churchmanship," —fidelity in shining for His glory "as lights in the world." How can we read the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians, and then think of our divisions? "How miserable," says Edward Bickersteth, "would an hospital be, if each patient were to be so offended with his neighbour's disease, as to differ with him on account of it, instead of trying to alleviate it!"

Ah! if we had more real communion

with our Saviour, should we not have more real communion with one another? If Christians would dip their arrows more in "the balm of Gilead," would there not be fewer wounds in the body of Christ? "How that word '*toleration*' is used amongst us!" said one who drank deeper than most of his Master's spirit—"how we *tolerate* one another —Dissenters *tolerate* Churchmen, and Churchmen *tolerate* Dissenters! Oh! hateful word! TOLERATE one for whom *Jesus* died! *Tolerate* one whom He bears upon His heart! *Tolerate* a temple of the living God! Oh! there ought to be *that* in the word which should make us feel *ashamed* before God!"

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND."

30TH MORNING.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"I am not of the world."—JOHN XVII. 14.

Not of the World.

IN one sense it was *not* so. Jesus did not seek to maintain His holiness intact and unspotted by avoiding contact with the world. He mingled familiarly in its busy crowds. He frowned on none of its innocent enjoyments; He fostered, by His example, no love of seclusion; He gave no warrant or encouragement to mortified pride, or disappointed hopes, to rush from its duties;—yet, with all this, what a halo of heavenliness encircled His pathway through it! "I am from above," was breathed in His every look, and word, and action, from the time when He lay in the slumbers of guileless infancy in His Bethlehem cradle, until He said, "I leave the world, and go to My Father!" He had moved un-

contaminated through its varied scenes, like the sunbeam, which, whatever it touches, remains as unsullied as when it issues from its great fountain.

But though Himself in His sinless nature "unconquerable" by temptation,—inviolably secure from the world's malignant influences, it is all worthy of note, as an example to us, that He never unnecessarily braved these. He knew the seducing spell that same world would exercise on His people, of whom, with touching sympathy, He says, "*These* are in the world!" He knew the *many* who would be involved and ensnared in its subtle worship, who, "minding earthly things," would seek to slake their thirst at polluted streams!

Reader! the great problem you have to solve, Jesus has solved for you—to be "*in* the world, and yet not *of* it." To abandon it, would be a dereliction of duty. It would be servants deserting their work;—soldiers flying from the

battle-field. *Live* in it, that while you live, the world may feel the better for you; and that *when* you die, the world,—the *Church*,—may feel your loss, and cherish your example! On its cares and duties, its trusts and responsibilities, its employments and enjoyments, inscribe the motto, "The world passeth away!" Beware of everything connected with it that would tend to deaden spirituality of heart; — unfitting the mind for serious thought, lowering the standard of Christian duty, and inducing a perilous conformity to its false manners, habits, tastes, and principles. As the best antidote to the love of the world, let the inner *vacuum* of the heart be filled with the love of God. Seek to feel the nobility of your regenerated nature;—that you have a nobler heritage to care for than the transitory glories which encircle "an indivisible point, a fugitive atom." How can I mix with the potsherds of the earth? Once, "I

lay among the pots;" now, I am "like a dove, whose wings are covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold!" "Stranger;" — "pilgrim;" — "sojourner;"—"my *citizenship* is in heaven!" Why covet tinsel honours and glories? Why be solicitous about the smiles of that which knew not (nay, which frowned on) its Lord? "Paul," says an old writer, "calls it *schema* (a mathematical figure), which is a mere *notion*, and nothing in substance."—(*Thomas Brooks.*)

Live above its corroding cares and anxieties; remembering the description Jesus gives of His own true people, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world!"

"ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND.

31st Morning.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."—Luke xxiii. 46.

Calmness in Death.

In the death of Jesus there were elements of fearfulness, which the believer can know nothing of. It was with Him the execution of a penal sentence. The sins of an elect world were laid upon Him. The very voice of His God was heard giving the tremendous summons, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd!" Yet His was a death of *peace*, nay, of *triumph!* Ere He closed His eyes, light broke through the curtains of thick darkness. In the calm composure of filial confidence He breathed away His soul,—"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit!" What was the secret of such tranquillity? This is His own key to it—"I have glorified Thee

on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

Reader! will it be so with *you* at a dying hour? will *your* "work" be done? Have you already fled to Jesus? Are you reposing in Him as your only Saviour, and following Him as your only pattern? Then—let death overtake you when it may—you will have nothing to do *but to die.* The grave will be irradiated with His presence and smile. He Himself, as the "Precursor," will show you "*the path of life.*" There can be no true peace till the fear of death be conquered by the sense of sin forgiven, through "the blood of the Cross." "Not till then," as one has it, "will you be able to be a quiet spectator of the open grave at the bottom of the hill which you are soon to descend." "The sting of death is *sin,* but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ!"

Seek now to live in the enjoyment of

greater filial nearness to your covenant God; and thus, when the hour of departure *does* come, you will be able, without irreverence, to take the very words of your dying Lord, and make them your own—"FATHER, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." FATHER! It is going HOME!—the heart of the child leaping at the thought of the paternal roof, and the paternal welcome! "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine!"

It is said of Archbishop Leighton, that he "was always happiest when, from the shaking of the prison doors, he was led to hope that some of those brisk blasts would throw them open, and give him the release he coveted." Christian! can you dread *that* which your Saviour has already vanquished? *Death!* It is as the angel to Peter, breaking the dungeon-doors, and leading to open day;—it is going to the world of your birthright, and leaving

the one of your exile;—"it is the soldier at nightfall lying down in his tent in peace, waiting the morning to receive his laurels." Oh! to be ever living in a state of holy preparation;—the mental eye gazing on the vista-view of an opening Heaven;—feeling that *every moment* is bringing us nearer and nearer that happy *Home;*—soon to be within reach of the Heavenly threshold, in sight of the Throne;—soon to be bending in adoring rapture with the Church triumphant—bathing in floods of infinite glory—"LIKE HIM,"—"seeing HIM *as He is,*" and that *for Ever and Ever!*

"AND EVERY MAN THAT HATH THIS HOPE IN HIM PURIFIETH HIMSELF, EVEN AS HE IS PURE!"

"Leaving

us

An Example,

that

Ye Should Follow

HIS STEPS."

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1 Pet. ii. 21.

THE

WORDS OF JESUS.

The Words of Jesus.

"A WORD spoken in due season," says the wise man, "how good is it!" If this be true regarding the utterances of uninspired lips, with what devout and paramount interest must we invest the sayings of Incarnate Truth—"the WORDS OF JESUS!"

We have in the motto-verses which head the succeeding pages, a few comforting responses from the Oracle of heavenly Wisdom—a few grapes plucked from the True Vine—a few living streams welling fresh from the Living Fountain. Every portion of Scripture is designed for nutriment to the soul—"the bread of life;" but surely we may well regard the recorded *Words of Jesus* as "the finest of the wheat." These are the Honey out of the true Rock, with which He will satisfy us. "The WORDS that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." [John vi. 63.]

The following are selected more especially as "*Words for the Weary*"—healing leaves for the wounded spirit, falling from the Tree of Life. Jesus was divinely qualified for the special office of speaking "many and *comfortable* words." "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I might

know how to speak a *Word in Season* to him that is *weary*."

Let us, like the disciple of Patmos, turn to hear the voice that speaks to us, saying, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in *His Word* do I hope." Eighteen hundred years have elapsed since these "words" were uttered. With tones of unaltered and unchanged affection they are still echoed from the inner sanctuary. They come this day, fresh as they were spoken, from the lips of Him whose memorial to all time is this: "*that same Jesus.*" [Acts i. 11.]

Reader! seek to realise, in meditating upon them, the simple but solemn truth — "*Christ speaks to me!*" Surely nothing can be more soothing with which to close your eyes on your nightly pillow, than —"A WORD OF JESUS."

1ST EVENING OF MONTH.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—MATT. XI. 28.

The Gracious Invitation.

GRACIOUS "word" of a gracious Saviour, on which the soul may confidingly repose, and be at peace for ever! It is a *present* rest—the rest of *grace* as well as the rest of *glory*. Not only are there signals of peace hung out from the walls of heaven—the lights of Home glimmering in the distance to cheer our footsteps; but we have the shadow of this great Rock in a *present* weary land. Before the Throne alone is there "the sea of glass," without one rippling wave; but there is a haven even on earth for the tempest-tossed—"We which have believed DO enter into rest."

Reader, hast thou found this blessed

repose in the blood and work of Immanuel? Long going about seeking rest and finding none, does this "word" sound like music in thine ears—"*Come unto Me*"? All other peace is counterfeit, shadowy, unreal. The eagle spurns the gilded cage as a poor equivalent for his free-born soarings. The soul's immortal aspirations can be satisfied with nothing short of the possession of God's favour and love in Jesus.

How unqualified is the invitation! If there had been one condition in entering this covenant Ark, we must have been through eternity at the mercy of the storm. But all are alike warranted and welcome, and none *more* warranted than welcome. For the weak, the weary, the sin-burdened and sorrow-burdened, there is an open door of grace.

Return, then, unto thy rest, O my soul! Let the sweet cadence of this "word of Jesus" steal on thee amid

the disquietudes of earth. Sheltered in Him, thou art safe for time, safe for eternity! There may be, and *will* be, temporary tossings, fears, and misgivings,—manifestations of inward corruption; but these will only be like the surface-heavings of the ocean, while underneath there is a deep, settled calm. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace" (*lit.* peace, peace) "whose mind is stayed on Thee." In the world it is care on care, trouble on trouble, sin on sin; but every wave that breaks on the believer's soul seems sweetly to murmur, "Peace, peace!"

And if the foretaste of this rest be precious, what must be the glorious consummation? Awaking in the morning of immortality, with the unquiet dream of earth over—faith lost in sight, and hope in fruition;—no more any bias to sin—no more latent principles of evil—nothing to disturb the spirit's deep everlasting tranquillity—the trembling

magnet of the heart reposing, where alone it can confidingly and permanently rest, in the enjoyment of the Infinite God.

"THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN UNTO YOU, THAT IN ME YE MIGHT HAVE PEACE."

2ND EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."—MATT. VI. 32.

The Comforting Assurance.

THOUGH spoken originally by Jesus regarding temporal things, this may be taken as a motto for the child of God amid all the changing vicissitudes of his changing history. How it should lull all misgivings; silence all murmurings; lead to lowly, unquestioning submissiveness — "My Heavenly Father knoweth that I have need of all these things."

Where can a child be safer or better than in a father's hand? Where can the believer be better than in the hands of his God? We are poor judges of what is best. We are under safe guidance with Infallible Wisdom. If we are tempted in a moment of rash presumption to say, "All these things are

against me;" let this "word" rebuke the hasty and unworthy surmise. Unerring wisdom and Fatherly love have pronounced *all* to be "needful."

My soul, is there aught that is disturbing thy peace? Are providences dark, or crosses heavy? Are spiritual props removed, creature comforts curtailed, gourds smitten and withered like grass?—write on each, "*Your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*" It was He who increased thy burden. Why? "*It was needed.*" It was He who smote down thy clay idol. Why? "*It was needed;*"—it was supplanting Himself; He had to remove it! It was He who crossed thy worldly schemes, marred thy cherished hopes. Why? "*It was needed.*" There was a lurking thorn in the coveted path. There was some higher spiritual blessing in reversion. He "*prevented*" thee with the blessings of His goodness.

Seek to cherish a spirit of more child-like confidence in thy Heavenly Father's will. Thou art not left unbefriended and alone to buffet the storms of the wilderness. Thy Marahs as well as thy Elims are appointed by Him. A gracious pillar-cloud is before thee. Follow it through sunshine and storm. He may "lead thee about," but He will not lead thee wrong. Unutterable tenderness is the characteristic of all His dealings. "Blessed be His name," says a tried believer, "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet" (*literally*, "equalleth" them), "he *equalleth* them for every precipice, every ascent, every leap."

And who is it that speaks this quieting word? It is He who Himself felt the preciousness of the assurance during His own awful sufferings, that all were *needed*, and all *appointed;* that from Bethlehem's cradle to Calvary's Cross there was not the redundant thorn in the chaplet of sorrow which

He, the Man of Sorrows, bore. Every drop in His bitter cup was mingled by His Father: "This cup which *Thou* givest me to drink, shall I not drink it?" Oh, if He could extract comfort in this hour of inconceivable agony, in the thought that a Father's hand lighted the fearful furnace-fires, what strong consolation is there in the same truth to all His suffering people!

What! one superfluous drop? one redundant pang? one unneeded cross? Hush the secret atheism! He gave His Son for thee. He calls Himself "thy Father!" Whatever be the trial under which thou art now smarting, let the word of a gracious Saviour be "like oil thrown on the fretful sea;"—let it dry every rebellious tear-drop. 'He, thine unerring Parent, knoweth that thou hast need of *this*, as well as *all* these things.'

"THY WORD IS VERY SURE, THEREFORE THY SERVANT LOVETH IT."

3RD EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."—JOHN XIV. 13.

The Power of Prayer.

BLESSED JESUS! it is Thou who hast unlocked to Thy people the gates of prayer. Without Thee they must have been shut for ever. It was Thy atoning merit on earth that first opened them; it is Thy intercessory work in heaven that keeps them open still.

How unlimited the promise—"*Whatsoever ye shall ask!*" It is the pledge of all that the needy sinner requires—all that an Omnipotent Saviour can bestow! As the great Steward of the mysteries of grace, He seems to say to every faithful servant, "Take thy bill, and under this my superscription, write what you please." And then, when the blank is filled up, he further en-

dorses each petition with the words, "*I* WILL *do it!*"

He further encourages us to ask "*in His name.*" In the case of an earthly petitioner there are some pleas more influential in obtaining a boon than others. Jesus speaks of *this* as forming the key to the heart of God. As David loved the helpless cripple of Saul's house "*for Jonathan's sake;*" so will the Father, by virtue of our covenant relationship to the true JONATHAN (*lit.*, "the gift of God"), delight in giving us even "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think."

Reader, do you know the blessedness of confiding your every want and every care — your every sorrow and every cross—into the ear of the Saviour? He is the "Wonderful Counsellor." With an exquisitely tender sympathy He can enter into the innermost depths of your need. That need may be great, but the everlasting arms are underneath it

all. Think of Him now, at this moment—the great Angel of the Covenant, with the censer full of much incense, in which are placed your feeblest aspirations, your most burdened sighs—the odour-breathing cloud ascending with acceptance before the Father's throne. The answer may tarry;—these your supplications may seem to be kept long on the wing, hovering around the mercy-seat. A gracious God sometimes sees it meet thus to test the faith and patience of His people. He delights to hear the music of their importunate pleadings—to see them undeterred by difficulties—unrepelled by apparent forgetfulness and neglect. But He *will* come at last;—the pent-up fountain of love and mercy will at length burst out;—the soothing accents will in His own good time be heard, "Be it unto thee according to thy word!"

Soldier of Christ! with all thine other panoply, forget not the "*All-*

prayer." It is that which keeps bright and shining "the whole armour of God." While yet out in the night of a dark world;—whilst still bivouacking in an enemy's country;—kindle thy watch-fires at the altar of incense. Thou must be Moses, pleading on the Mount, if thou wouldest be Joshua, victorious in the world's daily battle. Confide thy cause to this waiting Redeemer. Thou canst not weary Him with thine importunity. He delights in hearing. His Father is glorified in giving. The memorable Bethany-utterance remains unaltered and unrepealed—"I knew that Thou hearest me always." He is still the "Prince that has power with God and prevails;" —still He promises and pleads,—still He lives and loves!

"I WAIT FOR THE LORD, MY SOUL DOTH WAIT, AND IN HIS WORD DO I HOPE."

4TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."—JOHN XIII. 7.

The Unveiled Dealings.

O BLESSED day, when the long sealed book of mystery shall be unfolded, when the "fountains of the great deep shall be broken up," "the channels of the waters seen," and *all* discovered to be one vast revelation of unerring wisdom and ineffable love! Here we are often baffled at the Lord's dispensations; we cannot fathom His ways:—like the well of Sychar, they are deep, and we have nothing to draw with. But soon the "mystery of God will be finished;" the enigmatical "seals," with all their inner meanings, will be opened. When that "morning without clouds" shall break, each soul will be like the angel standing in the sun,—there will be no shadow; all will be perfect day!

Believer, be still! The dealings of thy Heavenly Father may seem dark to thee; there may seem now to be no golden fringe, no "bright light in the clouds." But a day of disclosures is at hand. "Take it on trust a little while." An earthly child takes *on trust* what his father tells him: when he reaches maturity, much that was baffling to his infant comprehension is explained. Thou art in this world in the nonage of thy being;—Eternity is the soul's immortal manhood. *There*, every dealing will be vindicated. It will lose all its darkness when bathed in the floods of the excellent glory!

Ah! instead of thus being as weaned children, how apt are we to exercise ourselves in matters too high for us: not content with knowing that our Father *wills* it, but presumptuously seeking to know *how* it is, and *why* it is. If it be unfair to pronounce on the unfinished and incompleted works of man; if the

painter, or sculptor, or artificer, would shrink from having his labours judged of when in a rough, unpolished, immatured state; how much more so with the works of God! How we should honour Him by a simple, confiding, unreserved submission to His will,—contented patiently to wait the fulfilment of this "*hereafter*" promise, when all the lights and shadows in the now half-finished picture will be blended and melted into one harmonious whole,—when all the now disjointed stones in the temple will be seen to fit into their appointed place, giving unity and compactness, and symmetry, to the building.

And who is it that speaks these living "words," "What *I* do"? It is He who died for us: who now lives for us. Blessed Jesus! Thou mayest *do* much that our blind hearts would like *un*done;—"terrible things in righteousness." But the heaviest (what we may be tempted to call the severest)

cross Thou canst lay upon us, we shall regard as only the *apparent* severity of unutterable and unalterable love. Eternity will unfold how *all, all* was needed; that nothing else, nothing *less*, could have done. If not now, at least then, the deliberate verdict on a calm retrospect of life will be this,—

"THE WORD OF THE LORD IS RIGHT, AND ALL HIS WORKS ARE DONE IN TRUTH."

5TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said "—

"Herein is my Father glorified, that *ye bear much fruit.*"
—JOHN XV. 8.

The Father Glorified.

WHEN surveying the boundless ocean of covenant mercy—every wave chiming, "God is Love!" does the question never present itself, "What can I do for this Great Being who hath done so much for me?" Recompense, I cannot! No more can my purest services add one iota to His underived glory, than the tiny taper can add to the blaze of the sun at noonday, or a drop of water to the boundless ocean. Yet, wondrous thought! from this worthless soul of mine there may roll in a revenue of glory which He who loves the broken and contrite spirit will "not despise." "*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.*"

Reader! are you a fruit-bearer in your Lord's vineyard? Are you seeking to make life one grand act of consecration to His glory — one thank-offering for His unmerited love. You may be unable to exhibit much fruit in the eye of the world. Your circumstances and position in life may forbid you to point to any splendid services, or any laborious and imposing efforts in the cause of God. It matters not. It is often those fruits that are unseen and unknown to man, ripening in seclusion, that He values most;—the quiet, lowly walk—patience and submission—gentleness and humility—putting yourself unreservedly in His hands—willing to be led by Him even in darkness—saying, Not *my* will, but *Thy* will:—the unselfish spirit, the meek bearing of an injury, the unostentatious kindness,—these are some of the "fruits" which your Heavenly Father loves, and by which He is glorified.

Perchance it may be with you the hour of trial, the season of protracted sickness, the time of desolating bereavement,—some furnace seven times heated. Herein, too, you may sweetly glorify your God. Never is your Heavenly Father *more* glorified by His children on earth, than when, in the midst of these furnace-fires, He listens to nothing but the gentle breathings of confiding faith and love — "let Him do what seemeth good unto Him." Yes, you can there glorify Him in a way which angels cannot do in a world where no trial is. They can glorify God only with the *crown;* you can glorify Him with the *cross* and the prospect of the *crown* together! Ah, if He be dealing severely with you,—if He, as the Great Husbandman, be pruning His vines, lopping their boughs, stripping off their luxuriant branches and "beautiful rods;"—remember the end!—"He purgeth it, that it may bring

forth *more* fruit," and "*Herein* is my Father glorified!"

Be it yours to lie passive in His hands, saying in unmurmuring resignation, Father, glorify Thy name. Glorify Thyself, whether by giving or taking, filling my cup or "emptying me from vessel to vessel!" Let me know no will but Thine. Angels possess no higher honour and privilege than glorifying the God before whom they cast their crowns. How blessed to be able thus to claim brotherhood with the spirits in the upper sanctuary! nay more, to be associated with the Saviour Himself in the theme of His own exalted joy, when He said, "*I* have *glorified* Thee on earth!"

"THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN UNTO YOU, THAT MY JOY MIGHT REMAIN IN YOU, AND THAT YOUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL."

6TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"The very hairs of your head are all numbered."—MATT. x. 30.

The Tender Solicitude.

WHAT a "word" is this! All that befalls you, to the very numbering of your hairs, is known to God! Nothing can happen by accident or chance. Nothing can elude His inspection. The fall of the forest leaf—the fluttering of the insect—the waving of the angel's wing—the annihilation of a world,—all are equally noted by Him. Man speaks of great things and small things,—God knows no such distinction.

How especially comforting to think of this tender solicitude with reference to His own covenant people;—that He metes out their joys and their sorrows! Every sweet, every bitter, is ordained by Him. Even "*wearisome* nights" are "*appointed.*" Not a pang I feel,

not a tear I shed, but is known to Him. What are called "dark dealings" are the ordinations of undeviating faithfulness. Man *may* err—his ways are often crooked; "but as for God, *His* way is perfect!" He puts my tears into His bottle. Every moment the everlasting arms are underneath and around me. He keeps me as the apple of His eye. He bears me "as a man beareth his own son!"

Do I look to the future? Is there much of uncertainty and mystery hanging over it; it may be, much premonitory of evil? Trust Him. All is marked out for me. Dangers will be averted; bewildering mazes will reveal themselves to be interlaced and interweaved with mercy. "He keepeth the feet of His saints." A hair of their head will not be touched. He leads sometimes darkly, sometimes sorrowfully; most frequently by cross and circuitous ways we ourselves would not

have chosen; but *always* wisely, *always* tenderly. With all its mazy windings and turnings, its roughness and ruggedness, the believer's is not only *a* right way, but THE right way—the best which covenant love and wisdom could select. "Nothing," says Jeremy Taylor, "does so establish the mind amidst the rollings and turbulence of present things, as both a look above them and a look beyond them; above them, to the steady and good hand by which they are ruled; and beyond them, to the sweet and beautiful end to which, by that hand, they will be brought." "The Great Counsellor," says Thomas Brooks, "puts clouds and darkness round about Him, bidding us follow at His beck through the cloud, promising an eternal and uninterrupted sunshine on the other side." On that "other side" we shall see how every apparent rough blast has been hastening our barks nearer the desired haven!

Well may I commit the keeping of my soul to Jesus in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. He gave *Himself* to save me. This transcendent pledge of love is the guarantee for the bestowment of every other needed blessing. Oh, blessed thought! my sorrows numbered by the Man of Sorrows; my tears counted by Him who shed first His tears and then His blood for *me*. He will impose no needless burden, and exact no unnecessary sacrifice. There was no redundant drop in the cup of His own sufferings; neither will there be in that of His people. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

"WHEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS."

7TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."—JOHN X. 14.

The Good Shepherd. "THE Good Shepherd;" well can the sheep who know His voice, attest the truthfulness and faithfulness of this endearing name and word. Where would they have been through eternity, had He not left His throne of light and glory, to travel down to this dark valley of the curse, and give His life a ransom for many? Think of His love to each separate member of the flock;—wandering over pathless wilds with unwearied patience and unquenchable ardour, ceasing not the pursuit "*until* He finds it." Think of His love *now*—"I AM the Good Shepherd." Still that tender eye of watchfulness following the guilty wanderers;—the glories of heaven and

the songs of angels unable to dim or alter His affection;—the music of the words, at this moment coming as sweetly from His lips as when first He uttered them — "I know my sheep." Every individual believer—the weakest, the weariest, the faintest—claims His attention. His loving eye follows me day by day out to the wilderness— marks out my pasture, studies my wants, and trials, and sorrows, and perplexities — every steep ascent, every brook, every winding path, every thorny thicket. "He goeth before them." It is not rough driving, but gentle guiding. He does not take them over an unknown road; He Himself has trodden it before. He hath drunk of every "brook by the way;" "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." He seems to say, "Fear not; I cannot lead you wrong; follow me in the bleak waste, — the blackened wilderness, as

well as by the green pastures and the still waters. Do you ask why I have left the sunny side of the valley—carpeted with flowers, and bathed in sunshine—leading you to some high mountain apart, some cheerless spot of sorrow? Trust me, I will lead you by paths you have not known; but they are all known *to* Me, and selected *by* Me—'Follow thou Me.'"

"And am known of mine!" Reader! canst thou subscribe to these closing words of this gracious utterance? Dost thou "know" *Him* in all the glories of His person, in all the completeness of His finished work, in all the tenderness and unutterable love of His every dealing towards thee?

It has been remarked by Palestine travellers, that not only do the sheep there follow the guiding shepherd, but even while cropping the herbage as they go along, they look wistfully up to see that they are near him. Is this

thine attitude—"*looking unto Jesus*"? "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths." Leave the future to His providing. "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." *I shall not want!*—it has been beautifully called "the bleating of Messiah's sheep." Take it as thy watchword during thy wilderness wanderings, till grace be perfected in glory. Let this be the record of thy simple faith and unwavering trust, "These are they which *follow*, whithersoever He goeth."

"THE SHEEP FOLLOW HIM, FOR THEY KNOW HIS VOICE."

8TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."—JOHN XIV. 16.

The Abiding Comforter.

WHEN one beloved earthly friend is taken away, how the heart is drawn out towards those that remain! Jesus was now about to leave His sorrowing disciples. He directs them to one whose presence would fill up the vast blank His own absence was to make. His name was *The Comforter;* His mission was, "to abide with them for ever.' Accordingly, no sooner had the gates of heaven closed on their ascended Lord, than, in fulfilment of His own gracious promise, the bereaved and orphaned Church was baptized with Pentecostal fire. "When I depart, I will send Him unto you."

Reader, do you realise your privilege

of living under the dispensation of the Spirit? Is it your daily prayer that He may come down in all the plenitude of His heavenly graces on your soul, even "as rain upon the mown grass, and showers that water the earth"? You cannot live without Him; there can be not one heavenly aspiration, not one breathing of love, not one upward glance of faith, without His gracious influences. Apart from Him, there is no preciousness in the Word, no blessing in ordinances, no permanent sanctifying results in affliction. As the angel directed Hagar to the hidden spring, this blessed agent, true to His name and office, directs His people to the waters of comfort, giving new glory to the promises, investing the Saviour's character and work with new loveliness and beauty.

How precious is the title which this "Word of Jesus" gives Him—THE COMFORTER! What a word for a sor-

rowing world! The Church militant has its tent pitched in a "valley of *tears.*" The name of the Divine visitant who comes to her and ministers to her wants, is—*Comforter.* Wide is the family of the afflicted, but He has a healing balm for all—the weak, the tempted, the sick, the sorrowing, the bereaved, the dying! How different from other "sons of consolation"! *Human friends*—a look may alienate; adversity may estrange; death must separate! The "Word of Jesus" speaks of One whose attribute and prerogative is to "abide with for ever;" superior to all vicissitudes—surviving death itself.

And surely if anything else can endear His mission of love to His Church, it is that He comes direct from God, as the fruit and gift of *Jesus' intercession*—"*I* will pray the Father." This holy dove of peace and comfort is let out by the hand of Jesus from the

ark of covenant mercy within the veil! Nor is the gift more glorious than it is free. Does the word—the look, of a suffering child get the eye and the heart of an *earthly* father? "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him?" It is He who makes these "words of Jesus" "winged words."

"HE SHALL BRING ALL THINGS TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE, WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU."

9TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."—JOHN VIII. 11.

The Gracious Verdict.

How much more tender is Jesus than the tenderest of earthly friends! The apostles, in a moment of irritation, would have called down fire from heaven on obstinate sinners:—Their Master rebuked the unkind suggestion. Peter, the trusted but treacherous disciple, expected nothing but harsh and merited reproof for faithlessness:—He who knew well how that heart would be bowed with penitential sorrow, sends first the kindest of messages, and then the gentlest of rebukes, "Lovest thou me?" The watchmen in the Canticles smote the bride, tore off her veil, and loaded her with reproaches. When she found her lost Lord, there was not one

word of upbraiding! "So slow is He to anger," says an illustrious believer, "so ready to forgive, that when His prophets lost all patience with the people so as to make intercession *against* them, yet even then could He not be got to cast off this people whom He foreknew, for His great name's sake."

The guilty sinner to whom He speaks this comforting "word," was frowned upon by her accusers. But, if others spurned her from their presence, "*Neither do I condemn thee.*" Well it is to fall into the hands of this blessed Saviour-God, for great are His mercies.

Are we to infer from this, that He winks at sin? Far from it. His blood, His work—Bethlehem, and Calvary, refute the thought! Ere the guilt even of one solitary soul could be washed out, He had to descend from His everlasting throne to agonize on the accursed tree. But this "word of Jesus" is a word of tender encouragement to every sincere,

broken-hearted penitent, that crimson sins and scarlet sins are no barriers to a free, full, everlasting forgiveness. The Israelite of old, gasping in his agony in the sands of the wilderness, had but to "*look* and *live*;" and still does He say, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Upreared by the side of His own cross there was a monumental column for all Time, only second to itself in wonder. Over the head of the dying felon is the superscription written for despairing guilt and trembling penitence, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "He never yet," says Charnock, "put out a dim candle that was lighted at the Sun of Righteousness." "Whatever our guiltiness be," says Rutherford, "yet when it falleth into the sea of God's mercy, it is but like a drop of blood fallen into the great ocean."

Reader, you may be the chief of sinners, or it may be the chief of backsliders; your soul may have started aside like a broken bow. As the bankrupt is afraid to look into his books, you may be afraid to look into your own heart. You are hovering on the verge of despair. Conscience, and the memory of unnumbered sins, is uttering the desponding verdict, "I condemn thee." Jesus has a kinder word—a more cheering declaration—"*I* condemn thee *not:* go, and sin no more!"

"AND ALL WONDERED AT THE GRACIOUS WORDS THAT PROCEEDED OUT OF HIS MOUTH."

10TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."—MARK III. 35.

The Wondrous Relationship. As if no solitary earthly type were enough to image forth the love of Jesus, He assembles into one verse a group of the tenderest earthly relationships. Human affection has to focus its loveliest hues, but all is too little to afford an exponent of the depth and intensity of *His*. "As one whom his *mother* comforteth;" "my *sister*, my *spouse*." He is "*Son*," "*Brother*," "*Friend*" — all in one; "cleaving closer than any brother."

And can we wonder at such language? Is it merely figurative, expressive of more than the reality?—He gave *Himself* for us; after that pledge of His affection we must cease to mar-

vel at any expression of the interest He feels in us. Anything He can *say* or *do* is infinitely less than what He *has done.*

Believer! art thou solitary and desolate? Has bereavement severed earthly ties? Has the grave made forced estrangements, — sundered the closest links of earthly affection? In Jesus thou hast filial and fraternal love combined; He is the Friend of friends, whose presence and fellowship compensates for all losses, and supplies all blanks. "He setteth the solitary in families." If thou art orphaned, friendless, comfortless here, remember there is, in the Elder Brother on the Throne a love deep as the unfathomed oc an, boundless as Eternity!

And who are those who can claim the blessedness spoken of under this wondrous imagery? On whom does He lavish this unutterable affection? No outward profession will purchase it. No church, no priest, no ordinances, no

denominational distinctions. It is on those who are possessed of *holy characters*. "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven!" He who reflects the mind of Jesus; imbibes His Spirit; takes His Word as the regulator of his daily walk, and makes His glory the great end of his being; he who lives *to* God, and *with* God, and *for* God; the humble, lowly, Christ-like, Heaven-seeking Christian;—he it is who can claim as his own, this wondrous heritage of love! If it be a worthy object of ambition to be loved by the good and the great on earth, what must it be to have an eye of love ever beaming upon us from the Throne, in comparison with which the attachment here of brother, sister, kinsman, friend—all combined—pales like the stars before the rising sun! Though we are often ashamed to call Him Brother, "He is not ashamed to call us *brethren*." He looks down on poor worms, and says,

"*The same* is my mother, and sister, and brother!" "I will write upon them," He says in another place, "my new name." Just as we write our name on a book to tell that it belongs to us; so Jesus would write His own name on *us*, the wondrous volumes of His grace, that they may be read and pondered by principalities and powers.

Have we "known and believed this love of God"? Ah, how poor has been the requital! Who cannot subscribe to the words of one, whose name is in all the churches,—"Thy love has been as a shower; the return but a dew-drop; and that dew-drop stained with sin."

"IF A MAN LOVE ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORDS; AND MY FATHER WILL LOVE HIM, AND WE WILL COME UNTO HIM, AND MAKE OUR ABODE WITH HIM."

11TH EVENING

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."—JOHN XIV. 18.

The Befriended Orphans.

DOES the Christian's path lie all the way through Beulah? Nay, he is forewarned it is to be one of "much tribulation." He has his Marahs as well as his Elims—his valleys of Baca as well as his grapes of Eshcol. Often is he left unbefriended to bear the brunt of the storm—his gourds fading when most needed—his sun going down while it is yet day—his happy home and happy heart darkened in a moment with sorrows with which a stranger (with which often a *brother*) cannot intermeddle. There is *One* Brother "born for adversity" who *can*. How often has that voice broken with its silvery accents the muffled stillness of

the sick-chamber or death-chamber! "'*I* will not leave you comfortless:' the world *may;* friends *may;* the desolations of bereavement and death *may ;* but *I will not;* you will be alone, yet *not* alone, for I your Saviour and your God will be with you!"

Jesus seems to have an especial love and affection for His orphaned and comfortless people. A father loves his sick and sorrowing child most; of all his household, it occupies most of his thoughts. Christ seems to delight to lavish His deepest sympathy on "him that hath no helper." It is in the hour of sorrow His people have found Him most precious; it is in "the wilderness" He speaks most "comfortably unto them." He gives them "their vineyards from thence:" in the places they least expected, wells of heavenly consolation break forth at their feet. As Jonathan of old, when faint and weary, had his strength revived by the honey he found

dropping in the tangled thicket: so the faint and woe-worn children of God find "honey in the wood"—everlasting consolation dropping from the Tree of life, in the midst of the thorniest thickets of affliction.

Comfortless ones, be comforted! Jesus often makes you *portionless* here, to drive you to Himself, the *everlasting portion.* He often dries every rill and fountain of earthly bliss, that He may lead you to say, "All my springs are in Thee." "He seems intent," says one who could speak from experience, "to fill up every gap love has been forced to make; one of his errands from heaven was to bind up the broken-hearted." How beautifully, in one amazing verse, does He conjoin the depth and tenderness of His comfort with the certainty of it,—"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye SHALL be comforted!"

Ah, how many would not have their

wilderness-state altered, with all its trials, and gloom, and sorrow, just that they might enjoy the unutterable sympathy and love of this Comforter of the comfortless, one ray of whose approving smile can dispel the deepest earthly gloom! As the clustering constellations shine with intensest lustre in the midnight sky, so these "words of Jesus" come out like ministering angels in the deep dark night of earthly sorrow. We may see no beauty in them when the world is sunny and bright; but He has laid them up in store for us against the dark and cloudy day."

"THESE THINGS HAVE I TOLD YOU, THAT WHEN THE TIME COMETH, YE MAY REMEMBER THAT I TOLD YOU OF THEM."

12TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—JOHN XVI. 33.

The World Conquered. AND shall I be afraid of a world already conquered? The Almighty Victor, within view of His crown, turns round to His faint and weary soldiers, and bids them take courage. They are not fighting their way through untried enemies. The God-Man Mediator "*knows* their sorrows." "He was in *all points* tempted." Both He (*i. e.*, Christ) who sanctifieth, and they (His people) who are sanctified, are all of one (nature)." As the great Precursor, he heads the pilgrim band, saying, "I will show you the path of life." The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints. Every thorn that wounds *them*, has wounded *Him* before. Every

cross they can bear, He has borne before. Every tear they shed, He has shed before. There is one respect, indeed, in which the identity fails,—He was "yet without sin;" but this recoil of His holy nature from moral evil gives Him a deeper and intenser sensibility towards those who have still corruption within responding to temptation without.

Reader! are you ready to faint under your tribulations? Is it a seducing world—a wandering, wayward heart? "Consider *Him* that endured!" Listen to your adorable Redeemer, stooping from His throne, and saying, "*I* have overcome the world." He came forth unscathed from its snares. Three times did he repel the Tempter, with the same heavenly weapon which He bids you wield, saying, "It is written." Is it some crushing trial, or overwhelming grief? He is "*acquainted* with *grief*." He, the mighty Vine, knows the mi-

nutest fibres of sorrow in the branches; when the pruning-knife touches *them*, it touches *Him*. "He has gone," says a tried sufferer, "through every class in our wilderness-school." He loves to bring His people into untried and perplexing places, that they may seek out the guiding pillar, and prize its radiance. He puts them on the darkening waves, that they may follow the light hung out astern from the only Bark of pure and unsullied Humanity that was ever proof against the storm.

Be assured there is disguised love in all He does. He who knows us infinitely better than we know ourselves, often puts a thorn in our nest to drive us to the wing, that we may not be grovellers for ever. "It is," says Evans, "upon the smooth ice we slip; the rough path is safest for the feet." The tearless and undimmed eye is not to be coveted *here; that* is reserved for heaven!

Who can tell what muffled and disguised "needs be" there may lurk under these world-tribulations? His true spiritual seed are often planted deep in the soil; they have to make their way through a load of sorrow before they reach the surface; but their roots are thereby the firmer and deeper struck. Had it not been for these lowly and needed "depths," they might have rushed up as feeble saplings, and succumbed to the first blast. He often leads His people still, as He led them of old, to "a high mountain apart;" but it is to a *high* mountain—*above the world:* and, better still, He who Himself hath overcome the world, leadeth them there, in order to impart to them some new and brighter manifestations of His love and faithfulness.

"I HOPE IN THY WORD."

13TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—LUKE XII. 32.

The Little Flock.

THE music of the Shepherd's voice again! Another comforting "word;" and how tender! *His* flock, a *little* flock, a *feeble* flock, a *fearful* flock, but a *beloved* flock, loved of the Father, enjoying His "good pleasure," and soon to be a *glorified* flock, safe in the fold, secure within the kingdom! How does He quiet their fears and misgivings? As they stand panting on the bleak mountain side, He points His crook upwards to the bright and shining gates of glory, and says, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you these!" What gentle words! What a blessed consummation! Gracious Saviour, Thy *gentleness* hath made me *great!*

That kingdom is the believer's by irreversible and inalienable charter-right—"I appoint unto you" (by covenant), says Jesus in another place, "a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." It is as sure as everlasting love and almighty power can make it. Satan, the great foe of the kingdom, may be injecting foul misgivings and doubts and fears as to your security; but he cannot denude you of your purchased immunities. He must first pluck the crown from the Brow upon the Throne, before he can weaken or impair this sure word of promise. If "it pleased the Lord" to *bruise* the Shepherd, it will surely please Him to make happy the purchased flock. If He smote His "Fellow" when the sheep were scattered, surely it will rejoice Him, for the Shepherd's sake, "to turn His hand upon the little ones."

Believers, think of this! "It is your Father's good pleasure." The Good

Shepherd, in leading you across the intervening mountains, shows you memorials of paternal grace studding all the way. He may "lead you about" in your way thither. He led the children of Israel of old out of Egypt to their promised kingdom,—how? By forty years' wilderness-discipline and privations. But trust Him; dishonour Him not with guilty doubts and fears. Look not back on your dark, stumbling paths; nor within, on your fitful and vacillating heart; but forwards to the land that is far off. How earnestly God desires your salvation! What a heaping together of similar tender "words" with that which is here addressed to us! The Gospel seems like a palace full of opened windows, from each of which He issues an invitation, declaring that He has no pleasure in our death—but rather that we would turn and live!

Let the melody of the Shepherd's reed fall gently on your ear,—"It is

your Father's good pleasure." I have given you, He seems to say, the best proof that it is *mine*. In order to purchase that kingdom, I died for you! But it is also *His:* "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so," says God, "will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Fear not, then, little flock! though yours for a while should be the bleak mountain and sterile waste, seeking your way Zionward, it may be with torn fleeces and bleeding feet; for,

"IT IS NOT THE WILL OF YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN, THAT ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES SHOULD PERISH."

14TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."—JOHN VII. 37.

The Unlimited Offer.

ONE of the most gracious "words" that ever "proceeded out of the mouth of God!" The time it was uttered was an impressive one; it was on "the last, the great day" of the Feast of Tabernacles, when a denser multitude than on any of the seven preceding ones were assembled together. The golden bowl, according to custom, had probably just been filled with the waters of Siloam, and was being carried up to the Temple amid the acclamations of the crowd, when the Saviour of the world seized the opportunity of speaking to them some truths of momentous import. Many, doubtless, were the "words of Jesus" uttered on the previous days, but the most important

is reserved for the last. What, then, is the great closing theme on which He rivets the attention of this vast auditory, and which He would have them carry away to their distant homes? It is, *The freeness of His own great Salvation*—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Reader, do you discredit the reality of this gracious offer? Are your legion sins standing as a barrier between you and a Saviour's proffered mercy? Do you feel as if you cannot come "just as you are;" that some partial cleansing, some preparatory reformation must take place before you can venture to the living fountain? Nay, "*If any man.*" What is freer than water?—The poorest beggar may drink "without money" the wayside pool. *That* is your Lord's own picture of His own glorious salvation; you are invited to come, "without one plea," in all your poverty and want, your weakness and unworthiness. Re-

member the Redeemer's saying to the woman of Samaria. She was the chief of sinners—profligate—hardened—degraded; but He made no condition, no qualification; *simple believing* was all that was required,—"If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldst have asked, and He would have given thee living water."

But is there not, after all, *one* condition mentioned in this "word of Jesus"?—"*If* any man *thirst.*" You may have the depressing consciousness that you experience no such ardent longings after holiness,—no feeling of your affecting need of the Saviour. But is not this very conviction of your want an indication of a feeble longing after Christ? If you are saying, "I have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep," He who makes offer of the salvation-stream will Himself fill your empty vessel,—"He satisfieth the *longing* soul with goodness."

"Jesus *stood* and *cried*." It is the solitary instance recorded of Him regarding whom it is said, "He shall *not* strive nor cry," lifting up "His voice in the streets." But it was truth of surpassing interest and magnitude He had to proclaim. It was a declaration, moreover, specially dear to Him. As it formed the theme of this ever-memorable *sermon* during His public ministry; so, when He was sealing up the inspired record,—the last utterances of His voice on earth, till that voice shall be heard again on the throne, contained the same life-giving invitation,—"Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Oh! as the echoes of that gracious saying—this blast of the silver trumpet—are still sounding to the ends of the world, may this be the recorded result,

"AS HE SPAKE THESE WORDS, MANY BELIEVED ON HIM."

15TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—MATT. XI. 30.

The Joyful Servitude.

CAN the same be said of Satan, or sin? With regard to *them*, how faithfully true rather is the converse—"My yoke is *heavy*, and my burden is *grievous!*" Christ's service is a happy service, the *only* happy one; and even when there is a cross to carry, or a yoke to bear, it is His own appointment. "*My* yoke." It is sent by no untried friend. Nay, He who puts it on His people, bore this very yoke Himself. "He *carried* our sorrows." How blessed this feeling of holy servitude to so kind a Master! not like "dumb, driven cattle," goaded on, but *led;* and led often most tenderly when the yoke and the burden are upon us. The great Apostle rarely speaks of him-

self under any other title but *one*. That *one* he seems to make his boast. He hath much whereof he might glory;—he had been the instrument in saving thousands;—he had spoken before kings;—he had been in Cæsar's palace and Cæsar's presence;—he had been caught up into the third heavens;—but in all his letters this is his joyful prefix and superscription, "The *Servant* (literally, *the slave*) of Jesus Christ!"

Reader! dost thou know this blessed servitude? Canst thou say with a joyful heart, "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant"? He is no hard taskmaster. Would Satan try to teach thee so? Let this be the refutation, "He loved me, and gave *Himself* for *me*." True, the yoke is the appointed discipline He employs in training His children for immortality. But be comforted! "It is His tender hand that *puts* it on, and *keeps* it on." He will suit the yoke to the neck, and the neck to the yoke.

He will suit His grace to your trials. Nay, He will bring you even to be in love with these, when they bring a long with them such gracious unfoldings of His own faithfulness and mercy. How His people need thus to be in heaviness through manifold temptations, to keep them meek and submissive! "Jeshurun (like a bullock unaccustomed to the harness,—fed and pampered in the stall) waxed fat, and kicked." Never is there more gracious love than when God takes His own means to curb and subjugate, to humble us, and to prove us—bringing us out from ourselves, our likings, our confidences, our prosperity, and putting us under the needed YOKE.

And who has ever repented of that joyful servitude? Among all the ten thousand regrets that mingle with a dying hour, and oft bedew with bitter tears a dying pillow, who ever told of regrets and repentance here?

Afflicted believer, has He ever failed

thee? Has His yoke been too grievous? Have thy tears been unalleviated —thy sorrows unsolaced—thy temptations above that thou wert able to bear? Ah! rather canst thou not testify, "The word of the Lord is tried;" I cast my burden upon Him, and He "sustained me"? How have seeming difficulties melted away! How has the yoke lost its heaviness, and the cross its bitterness, in the thought of Who thou wert bearing it for! There is a promised rest in the very carrying of the yoke; and a better rest remains for the weary and toil-worn when the appointed work is finished; for thus saith "that same Jesus,"—

"TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, AND LEARN OF ME, . . . AND YE SHALL FIND REST UNTO YOUR SOULS."

16TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you."—JOHN XV. 9.

The Measure of Love.

THIS is surely one of the most wondrous verses in the Bible. Who can sound the unimagined depths of that love which dwelt in the bosom of the Father from all eternity towards His Son? — and yet it forms the Saviour's own exponent of His love towards His people!

There is no subject more profoundly mysterious than those mystic intercommunings between the first and second persons in the adorable Trinity before the world was. Scripture gives us only some dim and shadowy revelations regarding them—distant gleams of light, and no more. Let one suffice. "*Then* I was by Him, as one brought up with

Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."

We know that earthly affection is deepened and intensified by increased familiarity with its object. The friendship of yesterday is not the sacred, hallowed thing, which years of growing intercourse have matured. If we may with reverence apply this test to the highest type of holy affection, what must have been that interchange of love which the measureless lapse of Eternity had fostered—a love, moreover, not fitful, transient, vacillating, subject to altered tones and estranged looks—but pure, constant, untainted, without one shadow of turning! And yet, listen to the "words of Jesus,"—"*As* the Father hath loved *me*, *so* have I loved *you!*" It would have been infinitely more than we had reason to expect, if He had said, "As my Father hath loved ANGELS, so have I loved you." But the love borne to no finite

beings is an appropriate symbol. Long before the birth of time or of worlds, that love existed. It was coeval with Eternity itself. Hear how the two themes of the Saviour's eternal rejoicing—the *love of His Father* and His *love for sinners*—are grouped together; —"Rejoicing always before HIM," *and* "in the habitable part of His *earth!*"

To complete the picture, we must take in a counterpart description of the *Father's* love to us;—"*Therefore* doth my Father love me," says Jesus in another place, "*because* I lay down my life!" God had an all-sufficiency in His own love;—He needed not the taper-love of creatures to add to His glory or happiness; but, He seems to say, so intense is His love for us, that He loves even His beloved Son *more* (if infinite love be capable of increase), because He laid down His life for the guilty! It is regarding the Redeemed it is said, "He

shall *rest* in His love—He shall rejoice over *them* with singing."

In the assertion, "God is love," we are left truly with no mere unproved averment regarding the existence of some abstract quality in the Divine nature. "Herein," says an apostle, "perceive we THE LOVE,"—(it is added in our authorized version, "of God," but, as it has been remarked, "Our translators need not have added *whose* love, for there is but one such specimen") —"*because* He laid down His life for us." No expression of love can be wondered at after *this*. Ah, how miserable are our best affections compared with His! "*Our* love is but the reflection—cold as the Moon; *His* is as the Sun." Shall we refuse to love Him more in return, who hath *first* loved, and so *loved us?*

17TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Only believe."—MARK v. 36.

The Brief Gospel.

THE briefest of the "words of Jesus," but one of the most comforting. They contain the essence and epitome of all saving truth.

Reader, is *Satan* assailing thee with tormenting fears? Is the thought of thy sins—the guilty past—coming up in terrible memorial before thee, almost tempting thee to give way to hopeless despondency? Fear not! A gentle voice whispers in thine ear,—"*Only believe.*" 'Thy sins are great, but My grace and merits are greater. "Only believe" that I died for thee—that I am living for thee and pleading for thee, and that "the faithful saying" is as "faithful" as ever, and as "worthy of all acceptation" as ever.'—Art

thou a *backslider?* Didst thou once run well? Has thine own guilty apostasy alienated and estranged thee from that face which was once all love, and that service which was once all delight? Art thou breathing in broken-hearted sorrow over the holy memories of a close walk with God—"Oh that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord did shine"? "*Only believe.*" Take this thy mournful soliloquy, and convert it into a prayer. "Only believe" the word of Him whose ways are not as man's ways—"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding."—Art thou beaten down with some heavy *trial?* have thy fondest schemes been blown upon—thy fairest blossoms been withered in the bud? has wave after wave been rolling in upon thee? hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? Hear the "word of Jesus" resounding amid the thickest midnight of gloom—penetrating even

through the vaults of the dead—"Believe, *only believe.*" There is an infinite *reason* for the trial—a lurking thorn that required removal, a gracious lesson that required teaching. The dreadful severing blow was dealt in love. God will be glorified in it, and your own soul made the better for it. Patiently wait till the light of immortality be reflected on a receding world. Here you must take His dealings on trust. The word of Jesus to you now is, "*Only believe.*" The word of Jesus in eternity (every inner meaning and undeveloped purpose being unfolded) will be, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest BELIEVE, thou shouldest SEE the glory of God?"—Are you agitated in *the prospect of death?* Through fear of the last enemy, have you been all your lifetime subject to bondage?—"*Only believe.*" "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." Dying grace will be given when a dying hour

comes. In the dark river a sustaining arm will be underneath you, deeper than the deepest and gloomiest wave. Ere you know it, the darkness will be past, the true Light shining; — the whisper of faith in the nether valley, "Believe! believe!" exchanged for angel-voices exclaiming, as you enter the portals of glory, — "No longer through a glass darkly, but now face to face!"

Yes! "Jesus Himself had no higher remedy for sin, for sorrow, and for suffering, than those two words convey. At the utmost extremity of His own distress, and of His disciples' wretchedness, He could only say, 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.' 'Believe, only believe.'"

' "LORD, I BELIEVE, HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF."

18TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid."— MARK VI. 50.

The Great Calm.

"IT is I" (or as our old version has it, more in accordance with the original), "I AM, be not afraid!" Jesus lives! His people may dispel their misgivings—Omnipotence treads the waves! To sense, it may seem at times to be otherwise;—wayward accident and chance may appear to regulate human allotments; but not so: "The Lord's voice is upon the waters," — He sits at the helm guiding the tempest-tossed bark, and guiding it well.

How often does He come to us, as He did to the disciples in that midnight hour, when all seems lost—"in the fourth watch of the night,"—when we least looked for Him; or when, like the shipwrecked apostle, "for days together

neither sun nor stars appeared, and no small tempest lay on us; when all hope that we should be saved seemed to be taken away,"—how often, *just at that moment*, is the "word of Jesus" heard floating over the billows!

Believer, art thou in trouble? listen to the voice in the storm, "Fear not, *I* AM." That voice, like Joseph's of old to his brethren, may *seem* rough, but there are gracious undertones of love. "It is I," he seems to say; It *was* I, that roused the storm; It is I, who, when it has done its work, will calm it, and say, "Peace, be still." Every wave rolls at My bidding;—every trial is My appointment;—all have some gracious end; they are not sent to dash you against the sunken rocks, but to waft you nearer heaven. Is it *sickness?* I am He who bare your sicknesses; the weary wasted frame, and the nights of languishing, were sent by Me. Is it *bereavement?* I AM "the Brother" born

for adversity—the loved and lost were plucked away by Me. Is it *death?* I AM the "Abolisher of death," seated by your side to calm the waves of ebbing life; It is *I*, about to fetch My pilgrims *home.* — It is My voice that speaks, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

Reader, thou wilt have reason yet to praise thy God for every one such storm! This is the history of every heavenly voyager: "*So* He bringeth them to their desired haven." "*So!*" That word, in all its unknown and diversified meaning, is in *His* hand. He suits His dealings to every case. "*So!*" With some, it is through quiet seas, unfretted by one buffeting wave. "*So!*" With others, it is "mounting up to heaven, and going down again to the deep." But whatever be the leading and the discipline, here is the grand consummation, "*So* He bringeth them unto their desired haven." It might have been

with thee the moanings of an eternal night-blast — no lull or pause in the storm; but soon the darkness will be past, and the hues of morn be tipping the shores of glory!

And what, then, should your attitude be? "Looking unto Jesus." (Literally, looking *from, unto*); looking away from self, and sin, and human props and refuges and confidences, and fixing the eye of unwavering and unflinching faith on a reigning Saviour. Ah, how a real quickening sight of Christ dispels all guilty fears! The Roman keepers of old were affrighted, and became as dead men. The lowly Jewish women feared not; why? *"I know that ye seek Jesus!"* Reader, let thy weary spirit fold itself to rest under the composing "word" of a gracious Saviour, saying—

"I WAIT FOR THE LORD, MY SOUL DOTH WAIT, AND IN HIS WORD DO I HOPE."

19TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."—JOHN XIV. 27.

The Dying Legacy. How we treasure the last sayings of a dying parent. How specially cherished and memorable are his last looks and last words! Here are the last words—the parting legacy—of a dying Saviour. It is a legacy of *peace.*

What peace is this? It is His own purchase;—a peace arising out of free forgiveness through His precious blood. It is sung in concert with "Glory to God in the highest:" a peace made as sure to us as eternal power and infinite love *can make* it! It is *peace* the soul wants. Existence is one long-drawn sigh after repose. *That* is nowhere else to be found, but through the blood of His cross. "Being justified by faith,

we *have* peace with God." "He giveth his beloved *rest*."

How different from the false and counterfeit peace in which so many are content to live, and content to die! The world's peace is all well, so long as prosperity lasts,—so long as the stream runs smooth, and the sky is clear; but when the cataract is at hand, or the storm is gathering, where is it? It is *gone!* There is no calculating on its permanency. Often when the cup is fullest, there is the trembling apprehension that in one brief moment it may be dashed to the ground. The soul may be saying to itself, "Peace, peace;" but, like the writing on the sand, it may be obliterated by the first wave of adversity. But, "Not as the world giveth!" The peace of the believer is deep—calm — lasting — *ever*lasting. The world, with all its blandishments, cannot give it. The world, with all its vicissitudes and fluctuations, cannot take it away.

It is brightest in the hour of trial. It lights up the final valley-gloom. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." Yes! how often is the believer's deathbed like the deep calm repose of a summer-evening's sky, when all nature is hushed to rest; the departing soul, like the vanishing sun, peacefully disappearing only to shine in another and brighter hemisphere! "I seem," said Simeon on his deathbed, "to have nothing to do but to wait: there is now nothing but *peace*, the *sweetest peace*."

Believer! do you know this peace which passeth understanding? Is it "keeping (literally, '*garrisoning* as in a citadel') your heart"? Have you learnt the blessedness of waking up, morning after morning, and feeling, 'I am at peace with my God;' of beholding by faith the true Aaron—the great High Priest—coming forth from the Holiest of all to "bless His people

with peace"? Waves of trouble may be murmuring around, but they cannot touch you; you are in the rock-crevice, athwart which the fiercest tornado sweeps by. Oh! leave not the making up of your peace with God to a dying hour! It will be a hard thing to smooth the death-pillow, if peace be left unsought till then. Make sure of it *now*. He, the true Melchisedec, is willing *now* to come forth to meet you with bread and wine—emblems of peaceful gospel blessings. All the "words of Jesus" are so many rills contributing to make your peace flow as a river;—"These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace."

"I WILL HEAR WHAT GOD THE LORD WILL SPEAK, FOR HE WILL SPEAK PEACE UNTO HIS PEOPLE AND TO HIS SAINTS."

20TH EVENING

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—MATT. XXVIII. 18.

The Supreme Investiture.

WHAT an empire is this! Heaven and earth —the Church militant—the Church triumphant — angels and archangels—saints and seraphs. At His mandate the billows were hushed; —demons crouched in terror,—the grave yielded its prey! "Upon His head are many crowns." He is made "head over *all things* to His Church." Yes! over *all things*, from the minutest to the mightiest. He holds the stars in His right hand:—He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;—feeding every candlestick with the oil of His grace, and preserving every star in its spiritual orbit. The Prince of Darkness has "a power," but, God be praised,

it is not an "all power;" *potent*, but not *omnipotent*. Christ holds him in a chain. He hath set bounds that he may not pass over. "Satan," we read in the book of Job, "went out (*Chaldee paraphrase*, 'with a licence') from the presence of the Lord." He was not allowed even to enter the herd of swine till Christ permitted him. He only "*desired*" to have Peter that he might "sift him;" there was a mightier countervailing agency at hand: "*I* have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

Believer, how often is there nothing but this grace of Jesus between thee and everlasting destruction: — Satan's key fitting the lock in thy wayward heart; but a Stronger than the strong man barring him out;—the power of the adversary fanning the flame; the Omnipotence of Jesus quenching it! Art thou even now feeling the strength of thy corruptions, the weakness of thy graces, the presence of some outward or

inward temptation? Look up to Him who has promised to make His grace sufficient for thee. "All power" is His prerogative; "all-sufficiency in all things" is His promise. It is power, too, in conjunction with tenderness. He who sways the sceptre of universal empire "gently leads" His weak, and weary, and burdened ones:—He who counts the number of the stars, loves to count the number of their sorrows; nothing too great, nothing too insignificant for *Him*. He puts every tear into His bottle. He paves His people's pathway with love!

Blessed Jesus! my everlasting interests cannot be in better or in safer keeping than in Thine. I can exultingly rely on the "*all-power*" of Thy Godhead. I can sweetly rejoice in the *all-sympathy* of Thy Manhood. I can confidently repose in the sure wisdom of Thy dealings. "Sometimes," says one, "we expect the blessing in *our* way; He

chooses to bestow it in *His*." But His way and His will must be the best. Infinite love, infinite power, infinite wisdom, are surely infallible guarantees. His purposes nothing can alter. His promises never fail. His word never falls to the ground.

"HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY, BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY."

21ST EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."—JOHN XVI. 14.

The Divine Glorifier.

THE Holy Spirit glorifying Jesus in the unfolding of His person, and character, and work, to His people! The great ministering agent between the Church on earth and its glorified Head in heaven,—carrying up to the Intercessor on the throne, the ever-recurring wants and trials, the perplexities and sins, of believers; and receiving out of His inexhaustible treasury of love,—comfort for their sorrows—strength for their weakness—sympathy for their tears—fulness for their emptiness,—and *this* the one sublime end and object of His gracious agency,—"*He shall glorify Me.*" "He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall

hear, that shall He speak." 'My words of sympathy—My omnipotent pleadings —the tender messages sent from an unchanged Human Heart,—all these shall He speak.' "He shall tell you," says an old divine, commenting on this passage, "He shall tell you nothing but stories of My love" (*Goodwin*). 'He shall have an ineffable delight in magnifying Me in the affections of My Church and people, and endearing Me to their hearts; and He is all worthy of credence, for He is "the Spirit of truth."'

How faithful has He been in every age to this His great office as "the glorifier of Jesus!" See the first manifestation of His power in the Christian Church at the day of Pentecost. What was the grand truth which forms the focus-point of interest in that unparalleled scene, and which brings three thousand stricken penitents to their knees? *It is the Spirit's unfolding of Jesus*—glorifying *Him* in eyes that before saw in

Him no beauty! Hear the key-note of that wondrous sermon, preached "in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power,"—"HIM hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to His people, and forgiveness of sins."

It is still the same peerless truth which the Spirit delights to unfold to the stricken sinner; and, in unfolding it, to make it mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. All these glorious inner beauties of Christ's work and character are undiscerned and undiscernible by the natural eye. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." He is the great Forerunner—a mightier than the Baptist—proclaiming, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

Reader! any bright and realizing view you have had of the Saviour's glory and excellency, is of the Spirit's imparting. When in some hour of sor-

row you have been led to cleave with pre-eminent consolation to the thought of the Redeemer's exalted sympathy—His dying, ever-living love;—or in the hour of death, when you feel the sustaining power of His exceeding great and precious promises;—what is this, but the Holy Spirit, in fulfilment of His all-gracious office, taking of the things of Christ, and showing them unto you; thus enabling you to magnify Him in your body, whether it be by life or death? As your motto should ever be, "*None* BUT *Christ;*" and your ever-increasing aspiration, "*More* OF *Christ;*" seek to bear in mind who it is that is alone qualified to impart the "excellency of this knowledge."

"THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH WHICH PROCEEDETH FROM THE FATHER, HE SHALL TESTIFY OF ME."

22ND EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy."—JOHN XVI. 20.

The Joyful Transformation.

CHRIST'S people are a sorrowing people. Chastisement is their badge—"great tribulation" is their appointed discipline. When they enter the gates of glory, He is represented as wiping away tears from their eyes. But, weeping ones, be comforted! Your Lord's special mission to earth—the great errand He came from heaven to fulfil, was "to bind up the broken-hearted." Your trials are meted out by a tender hand. He *knows* you too well—He *loves* you too well—to make this world tearless and sorrowless. "There must be rain, and hail, and storm," says Rutherford, "in the saint's cloud." Were your earthly course strewed with

flowers, and nothing but sunbeams played around your dwelling, it would lead you to forget your *nomadic* life,—that you are but sojourners here. The tent must at times be struck, pin by pin of the moveable tabernacle taken down, to enable you to say and to feel in the spirit of pilgrims, "We desire a better country." Meantime, while sorrow is your portion, think of Him who says, "I know your sorrows." Angels cannot say so:—they cannot sympathize with you, for trial is a strange word to them. But there is a Mightier than they who *can*. All He sends you and appoints you is in love. There is a provision and condition wrapt up in the bosom of every affliction, "*if need be.*" Coming from His hand, sorrows and riches are to His people convertible terms. If tempted to murmur at their trials, they are often murmuring at disguised mercies. "Why do you ask me," said Simeon, on his death-

bed, "what I *like?* I am the Lord's patient—I cannot but like *everything.*"

And *then*—"*your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*" "The morning cometh"—that bright morning when the dew-drops collected during earth's night of weeping shall sparkle in its beams; when, in one blessed *moment,* a life-long experience of trial will be effaced and forgotten, or remembered only by contrast, to enhance the fulness of the joys of immortality. What a revelation of gladness! The map of time disclosed; and every little rill—every river of sorrow, will be seen to have been flowing heavenwards,—every rough blast to have been sending the bark nearer the haven! In that joy, God Himself will participate. In the last "words of Jesus" to His people when they are standing by the triumphal archway of Glory, ready to enter on their thrones and crowns, He speaks of their joy as if it were all *His own.*

"Enter ye into the joy *of your Lord.*"

Reader, may this joy be yours! Sit loose to the world's joys. Have a feeling of chastened gratitude and thankfulness when you have them; but beware of resting in them, or investing them with a permanency they cannot have. Jesus had His eye on *Heaven* when He added—

"YOUR JOY NO MAN TAKETH FROM YOU."

23RD EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."—JOHN XVII. 24.

The Omnipotent Prayer.

THIS is not the petition of a suppliant, but the claim of a conqueror. There was only *one* request He ever made, or ever *can* make, that was refused; it was the prayer wrung forth by the presence and power of superhuman anguish: "Father, *if it be possible*, let this cup pass from me!" Had that prayer been answered, never could one consolatory "word of Jesus" have been ours. "*If it be possible;*" —*but* for that gracious parenthesis, we must have been lost for ever! In unmurmuring submission, the bitter cup *was* drained; all the dread penalties of the law were borne, the atonement completed, an all-perfect righteousness wrought out; and now, as the

stipulated reward of His obedience and sufferings, the Victor claims His trophies. What are they? Those that were given Him of the Father—the countless multitudes redeemed by His blood. These He "*wills*" to be with Him "where He is"—the spectators of His glory, and partakers of His crown. Wondrous word and will of a dying testator! His last prayer on each is an importunate pleading for their glorification; His parting wish is to meet them in heaven: as if these earthly jewels were needed to make His crown complete,—their happiness and joy the needful complement of His own!

Reader! learn from this, the grand element in the bliss of your future condition—it is *the presence of Christ*; "*with Me* where I am." It matters comparatively little as to the locality of heaven. "We shall see *Him* as He is," is "the blessed hope" of the Christian. Heaven would be *no* heaven without

Jesus; the withdrawal of His presence would be like the blotting out of the sun from the firmament; it would uncrown every seraph, and unstring every harp. But, blessed thought! it is His own stipulation in His testamentary prayer, that Eternity is to be spent in union and communion with *Himself;*—gazing on the unfathomed mysteries of His love, becoming more assimilated to His glorious image, and drinking deeper from the ocean of His own joy.

If anything can enhance the magnitude of this promised bliss, it is the concluding words of the verse, in which He grounds His plea for its bestowment: "*I will*—that they behold my glory;"—why? "For Thou lovedst (not *them*, but) ME before the foundation of the world!" It is equivalent to saying, "If Thou wouldst give *Me* a continued proof of Thine everlasting love and favour to Myself, it is by loving and exalting My redeemed people.

In loving *them* and glorifying them, Thou art loving and glorifying Me: so endearingly are their interests and My own bound up together!"

Believer, think of that all-prevailing voice, at this moment pleading for thee within the veil!—that omnipotent "*Father, I will,*" securing every needed boon! There is given, so to speak, a blank *cheque* by which He and His people may draw indefinite supplies out of the exhaustless treasury of the Father's grace and love. God Himself endorses it with the words, "Son, Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is Thine." How it would reconcile us to Earth's bitterest sorrows, and hallow Earth's holiest joys, if we saw them thus hanging on the "*will*" of an all-wise Intercessor, who ever pleads in love, and never pleads in vain!

"BE IT UNTO ME ACCORDING TO THY WORD."

24TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Because I live, ye shall live also."—JOHN XIV. 19.

The Immutable Pledge. GOD sometimes selects the most stable and enduring objects in the material world to illustrate His unchanging faithfulness and love to His Church. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so doth the Lord compass His people." But here, the Redeemer fetches an argument from *His own everlasting nature.* He stakes, so to speak, His own existence on that of His saints. "*Because I live,* ye shall live also."

Believer! read in this "word of Jesus" thy glorious title-deed. *Thy Saviour lives*—and His life is the guarantee of thine own. Our true Joseph is alive. "He is our Brother. He talks kindly to us!" That life of His, is all

that is between us and everlasting ruin. But with Christ for our life, how inviolable our security! The great Fountain of being must first be dried up, before the streamlet can. The great Sun must first be quenched, ere one glimmering satellite which He lights up with His splendour can. Satan must first pluck the crown from that glorified Head, before he can touch one jewel in the crown of His people. He cannot shake one pillar without shaking first the throne. "If we perish," says Luther, "Christ perisheth with us."

Reader! is thy life now "hid with Christ in God"? Dost thou know the blessedness of a vital and living union with a living, life-giving Saviour? Canst thou say with humble and joyous confidence, amid the fitfulness of thine own ever-changing frames and feelings, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"? "*Jesus liveth!*"—They are the happiest words

a lost soul and a lost world can hear! Job, four thousand years ago, rejoiced in them. "I know," says he, "that I have *a living Kinsman.*" John, in his Patmos exile, rejoiced in them. "I am He that liveth" (or *the Living One*), was the simple but sublime utterance with which he was addressed by that same "Kinsman," when He appeared arrayed in the lustres of His glorified humanity. "This is *the* record" (as if there was a whole gospel comprised in the statement), "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this *life* is in His Son." St Paul, in the 8th chapter to the Romans—that finest portraiture of Christian character and privilege ever drawn, begins with "no condemnation," and ends with "no separation." Why "no separation"? Because the life of the believer is incorporated with that of his adorable Head and Surety. The colossal Heart of redeemed humanity beats upon the throne, sending its mighty

pulsations through every member of His body; so that, before the believer's spiritual life can be destroyed, Omnipotence must become feebleness, and Immutability become mutable!

But, blessed Jesus, "Thy word is very sure, therefore Thy servant loveth it."

"I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE, AND THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH, NEITHER SHALL ANY MAN PLUCK THEM OUT OF MY HAND."

25TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—MATT. XXVIII. 20.

The Abiding Presence.

SUCH were "the words of Jesus" when He was just about to ascend to Heaven. The mediatorial throne was in view—the harps of glory were sounding in His ears; but all His thoughts are on the pilgrim Church He is to leave behind. His last words and benedictions are for *them*. "I go," He seems to say, "to Heaven, to my purchased crown—to the fellowship of angels—to the presence of my Father; *but*, nevertheless, 'Lo! I am with *you* alway, even unto the end of the world.'"

How faithfully did the apostles, to whom this promise was first addressed, experience its reality! Hear the testimony of the beloved disciple who had

once leant on his Divine Master's bosom —who "had heard, and seen, and looked upon Him." That glorified bosom was now hid from his sight; but does he speak of an absent Lord, and of His fellowship only as among the holy memories of the past? No! with rejoicing emphasis he can exclaim—"Truly our fellowship is with .... *Jesus Christ.*"

Amid so much that is fugitive here, how the heart clings to this assurance of the abiding presence of the Saviour! Our best earthly friends—a few weeks may estrange them; — centuries have rolled on — Christ is still the same. How blessed to think, that if I am indeed a child of God, there is not the lonely instant I am without His guardianship! When the beams of the morning visit my chamber, the brighter beams of a brighter Sun are shining upon me. When the shadows of evening are gathering around, "it is not night," if He the unsetting "Sun of

my soul," is "near." His is no fitful companionship—present in prosperity, gone in adversity. He never changes. He is always the same,—in sickness and solitude, in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death. Not more faithfully did the pillar-cloud and column of fire of old precede Israel, till the last murmuring ripple of Jordan fell on their ears on the shores of Canaan, than does the presence and love of Jesus abide with His people. Has His word of promise ever proved false? Let the great cloud of witnesses now in glory testify. "Not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord our God hath spoken." *This* "word of the Lord is tried"—"having loved His own, which were in the world, He loved them *unto the end.*"

Believer! art thou troubled and tempted? Do dark providences and severe afflictions seem to belie the truth and reality of this gracious assurance? Are you ready to say, "If the Lord be

indeed with us, why has all this befallen us?" Be assured He has some faithful end in view. By the removal of prized and cherished earthly props and refuges, He would unfold more of His own tenderness. Amid the wreck and ruin of earthly joys, which, it may be, the grave has hidden from your sight, One nearer, dearer, tenderer still, would have you say of Himself, "*The Lord liveth;* and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted." "Thanks be to God, who *always* maketh us to triumph in Christ." Yes! and never more so, than, when stripped of all competing objects of creature affection, we are left, like the disciples on the mount, with "*Jesus only!*"

"THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN UNTO YOU, THAT IN ME YE MIGHT HAVE PEACE."

26TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—JOHN XI. 25.

The Resurrection and Life.

WHAT a voice is this breaking over a world which for six thousand years has been a dormitory of sin and death! For four thousand of these years, heathendom could descry no light through the bars of the grave; her oracles were dumb on the great doctrine of a future state, and more especially regarding the body's resurrection. Even the Jewish Church, under the Old Testament dispensation, seemed to enjoy little more than fitful and uncertain glimmerings, like men groping in the dark. It required death's great Abolisher to show, to a benighted world, the luminous "path of life." With Him rested the "bringing in of a better

hope"—the unfolding of "the mystery which had been hid from ages and generations." Marvellous disclosure! that this mortal frame, decomposed and resolved into its original dust, shall yet start from its ashes, remodelled and reconstructed—"a glorified body!" Not like "the earthly tabernacle" (a mere shifting and movable *tent*, as the word denotes), but incorruptible—immortal! The beauteous transformation of the insect from its chrysalis state—the buried seed springing up from its tiny grave to the full-eared corn or gorgeous flower—these are nature's mute utterances as to the possibility of this great truth, which required the unfoldings of "a more sure word of prophecy." But the Gospel has fully revealed, what Reason, in her loftiest imaginings, could not have dreamt of. Jesus "hath brought life and immortality to light." He, the Bright and Morning Star, hath "turned the shadow of death into the morning." He gives,

in His own resurrection, the earnest of that of His people;—He is the first-fruits of the immortal harvest yet to be gathered into the garner of Heaven.

Precious truth! This "word of Jesus" spans like a celestial rainbow the entrance to the dark valley. Death is robbed of its sting. In the case of every child of God, the grave holds in custody precious, because redeemed, dust. Talk of it not as being committed to a dishonoured tomb!—it is locked up, rather, in the casket of God until the day "when He maketh up His jewels;" when it will be fashioned, in deathless beauty, like unto the glorified body of the Redeemer. Angels, meanwhile, are commissioned to keep watch over it, till the trump of the archangel shall proclaim the great "Easter of creation." They are the "reapers," waiting for the world's great Harvest Home, when Jesus Himself shall come again—not as He once did, humiliated

and in sorrow, but rejoicing in the thought of bringing back all His sheaves with him.

Afflicted and bereaved Christian!—thou who mayest be mourning in bitterness those "who are not;"—rejoice through thy tears, in these hopes "full of immortality." The silver cord is only "loosed," not broken. Perchance, as thou standest in the chamber of death, or by the brink of the grave;—in the depths of that awful solitude and silence which reigns around,—this may be thy plaintive and mournful soliloquy —"Shall the dust praise Thee?" Yes, it *shall!* This very dust that hears now unheeded thy footsteps, and unmoved thy tears, shall through eternity praise its redeeming God;—it shall proclaim His truth!

"LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO BUT UNTO THEE? THOU HAST THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE."

27TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."—JOHN XVI. 16.

The Little While.

LONG seem the moments when we are separated from the friend we love. An absent brother—how his return is looked and longed for! The "Elder Brother"—the "Living Kinsman"—sends a message to His waiting Church and people;—a word of solace, telling that *soon* ("a little while"), and He will be back again, never again to leave them.

There are indeed blessed moments of communion which the believer enjoys with His beloved Lord *now*. But how fitful and transient! To-day, life is a brief Emmaus journey—the soul happy in the presence and love of an unseen Saviour. To-morrow, He is *gone;* and

the bereft spirit is led to interrogate itself in plaintive sorrow,—"Where is now thy God?" Even when there is no such experience of darkness and depression, how much there is in the world around to fill the believer with sadness! His Lord rejected and disowned—His love set at nought—His providences slighted—His name blasphemed—His creation groaning and travailing in pain:—disunion, too, among His people—His loving heart wounded in the house of His friends!

But "yet a little while," and all this mystery of iniquity will be finished. The absent Brother's footfall will soon be heard,—no longer "as a wayfaring man who turneth aside to tarry for a night," but to receive His people into the permanent "mansions" His love has been preparing, and from which they shall go no more out. Oh, blessed day, when creation will put on her Easter robes—when her Lord, so long

dishonoured, will be enthroned amid the hosannahs of a rejoicing universe — angels lauding Him—saints crowning Him—sin, the dark plague-spot on His universe, extinguished for ever—death swallowed up in eternal victory!

And it is but "a little while." "Yet a little while," we elsewhere read, "and He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry" (literally, "a little while as may be"). "He will stay not a moment longer," says Goodwin, "than He hath despatched all our business in Heaven for us." With what joy will He send His mission-Angel with the announcement, "the little while is at an end;" and to issue the invitation to the great festival of glory, "Come! for all things are ready!"

Child of sorrow! think often of this "*little while.*" "The days of this mourning will soon be ended." There is a limit set to thy suffering time,— "After that ye have suffered a WHILE."

Every wave is numbered between you and the haven; and then, when that haven is reached, oh, what an apocalypse of glory!—the "little while" of time merged into the great and unending "while" of eternity!—to be "*for ever with the Lord*"—the same unchanged and unchanging Saviour!

"A little while, and ye *shall* see me." Would that the eye of faith might be kept more intently fixed on "that glorious appearing!" How the world, with its guilty fascinations, tries to dim and obscure this blessed hope. How the heart is prone to throw out its fibres here, and get them rooted in some perishable object! Reader, seek to dwell more habitually on this the grand consummation of all thy dearest wishes. "Stand on the edge of your nest, pluming your wings for flight." Like the mother of Sisera, be looking for the expected chariot.

"HE IS FAITHFUL THAT PROMISED."

28TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."— MATT. v. 8.

The Beatific Vision.

HERE is Heaven! This "word of Jesus" represents the future state of the glorified to consist not in locality, but in character; the essence of its bliss is the full vision and fruition of God. Our attention is called from all vague and indefinite theories about the *circumstantials* of future happiness. The one grand object of contemplation—the "glory which excelleth," is *the sight of God Himself:* and the one grand practical lesson enforced on His people, is the cultivation of that purity of heart without which none could *see,* or (even could we suppose it possible to be admitted to *see* Him) none could *enjoy* God! "The kingdom of Heaven com-

eth not with observation . . . the kingdom of God is *within* you."

Reader, hast thou attained any of this heart-purity and heart-preparation? It has been beautifully said that "the openings of the streets of heaven are on earth." Even here we may enjoy, in the possession of holiness, some foretaste of coming bliss. Who has not felt that the happiest moments of their lives were those of close walking with God—nearness to the mercy-seat,—when self was surrendered, and the eye was directed to the glory of Jesus, with most single, unwavering, undivided aim? What will Heaven be, but the entire surrender of the soul to Him, without any bias to evil, without the fear of corruption within echoing to temptation without; every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; no contrariety to His mind; all in blessed unison with His will; the whole *being*, impregnated with holi-

ness;—the intellect purified and ennobled, consecrating all its powers to His service;—memory, a holy repository of pure and hallowed recollections;—the affections without one competing rival, purged from all the dross of earthliness;—the love of God, the one supreme animating passion—the glory of God, the motive principle interfused through every thought, and feeling, and action of the life immortal;—in one word, the heart a pellucid fountain; no sediment to dim its purity, no "angel of sorrow" to come and trouble the pool: the long night of life over; and *this* the glory of the eternal morrow which succeeds it.—"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with *Thy* likeness."

Yes, this is Heaven, subjectively and objectively—*purity of heart*, and "*God all in all!*" Much, doubtless, there may, and will be, of a subordinate kind, to intensify the bliss of the Redeemed; communion with saints and angels;—

re-admission into the society of death-divided friends: but all these will fade before the great central glory, "God Himself shall be with them, and be their God; they shall *see His face!*" Believers have been aptly called *heliotropes*—turning their faces as the sunflower towards the Sun of Righteousness, and hanging their leaves in sadness and sorrow when that Sun is away. It will be in Heaven the emblem is complete. *There*, every flower in the heavenly garden will be turned Godwards, bathing its tints of loveliness in the glory that excelleth! Reader, may it be yours, when o'er-canopied by that cloudless sky, to know all the marvels contained in the few glowing words, "We shall be *like Him*, for we shall *see Him as He is.*"

"AND EVERY MAN THAT HATH THIS HOPE IN HIM PURIFIETH HIMSELF EVEN AS HE IS PURE."

29TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"In my Father's house are many mansions."— JOHN XIV. 2.

The Many Mansions. WHAT a home-aspect there is in this "word of Jesus!" He comforts His Church by telling them that soon their wilderness-wanderings will be finished,—the tented tabernacle, suited to their present probation-state, exchanged for the enduring "mansion!" Nor will it be any strange dwelling: a *Father's* home — a *Father's* welcome awaits them. There will be accommodation for all. Thousands have already entered its shining gates, — patriarchs, prophets, saints, martyrs, young and old; and still there is room!

The pilgrim's motto on earth is, "Here we have no continuing city." Even "Sabbath tents" must be struck. Holy seasons of communion must ter-

minate. "Arise, let us go hence!" is a summons which disturbs the sweetest moments of tranquillity in the Church below;—but *in Heaven*, every believer becomes a pillar in the temple of God, and "he shall *go no more out.*" Here it is but the lodging of a wayfarer turning aside to tarry for a brief night. Here we are but "tenants at will;" our possessions are but moveables—ours to-day, gone to-morrow. But these "many mansions" are an inheritance incorruptible and unfading. Nothing can touch the heavenly patrimony. Once within the Father's house, and we are in the house for ever!

Think, too, of Jesus, gone to *prepare* these mansions,—"I go to prepare a place for you." What a wondrous thought—Jesus now busied in Heaven in His Church's behalf! He can find no abode in all His wide dominions, befitting as a permanent dwelling for His ransomed ones. He says, "I will

make new heavens and a new earth. I will found a special kingdom;—I will rear eternal mansions expressly for those I have redeemed with My blood!"

Reader, let the prospect of a dwelling in this "house of the Lord for ever," reconcile thee to any of the roughnesses or difficulties in thy present path,—to thy pilgrim provision and pilgrim fare. Let the distant beacon-light, that so cheeringly speaks of a *Home* brighter and better far than the happiest of earthly ones, lead thee to forget the intervening billows, or to think of them only as wafting thee nearer and nearer to thy desired haven! "Would," says a saint, who has now entered on his rest, "that one could read, and write, and pray, and eat and drink, and compose one's self to sleep, as with the thought,—soon to be in heaven, and that for ever and ever!"

"My Father's house!" How many a departing spirit has been cheered and

consoled by the sight of these glorious Mansions looming through the mists of the dark valley;—the tears of weeping friends rebuked by the gentle chiding—"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto *my Father!*" Death truly is but the entrance to this our Father's house. We speak of the "*shadow of death*" — it is only the shadow which falls on the portico as we stand, for a moment, knocking at the longed-for gate: — the next! a Father's voice of welcome is heard—

"SON! THOU ART EVER WITH ME, AND ALL THAT I HAVE IS THINE."

30TH EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—JOHN XIV. 3.

The Promised Return. ANOTHER "word of promise" concerning the Church's "Blessed hope." Orphaned pilgrims, dry your tears! Soon the Morning Hour will strike, and the sighs of a groaning and burdened creation be heard no more. Earth's six thousand years of toil and sorrow are waning; the Millennial Sabbath is at hand. Jesus will soon be heard to repeat, concerning all his sleeping saints, what He said of old regarding one of them: "I go to awake them out of sleep!" Your beloved Lord's first coming was in humiliation and woe; His name was—the "Man of Sorrows;" He had to travel on, amid darkness and desertion, His blood-stained path; a

chaplet of thorns was the only crown He bore. But soon He will come "the second time, without a sin-offering, unto salvation;" never again to leave His Church, but to receive those who followed Him in His cross, to be everlasting partakers with Him in His crown. He may seem to tarry. External nature, in her unvarying and undeviating sequences, gives no indication of His approach. Centuries have elapsed since He uttered the promise, and still He lingers; the everlasting hills wear no streak of approaching dawn; we seem to listen in vain for the noise of His chariot-wheels. "But the Lord is not slack concerning His promise;" He gives you "this word" in addition to many others as a *keepsake*—a pledge and guarantee for the certainty of His return,—"*I will come again.*"

Who can conceive all the surpassing blessedness connected with that advent? The Elder Brother arrived to fetch the

younger brethren home! — the true Joseph revealing Himself in unutterable tenderness to the brethren who were once estranged from Him;—"receiving them unto Himself;" — not satisfied with apportioning a kingdom for them, but, as if all His own joy and bliss were intermingled with theirs, "Where *I am*," says He, "there *you* must be also." "Him that overcometh," says He again, "will I grant to sit *with Me* on My Throne."

Believer, can you *now* say with some of the holy transport of the apostle, "Whom having not seen, we love"? What must it be when you come to see Him "face to face," and that for ever and ever! If you can tell of precious hours of communion in a sin-stricken, woe-worn world, with a treacherous heart, and an imperfect or divided love; —what must it be when you come, in a sinless, sorrowless state, with purified and renewed affections, to see the King

in His beauty? The letter of an absent brother, cheering and consolatory as it is, is a poor compensation for the joys of personal and visible communion. The absent Elder Brother on the Throne speaks to you *now* only by His Word and Spirit;—soon you shall be admitted to His immediate fellowship, seeing Him "as He is"—He Himself unfolding the wondrous chart of His providence and grace,—leading you about from fountain to fountain among the living waters, and with His own gentle hand wiping the last lingering tear-drop from your eye. *Heaven an everlasting home with Jesus!* "Where I am, there ye may be also."—He has appended a cheering postscript to this word, on which He has "caused us to hope:"—

"HE WHICH TESTIFIETH THESE THINGS SAITH, SURELY I COME QUICKLY."

31ST EVENING.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said"—

"Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."—LUKE XII. 32.

The Closing Benediction.

CHILD of God! is this thine attitude, as the expectant of thy Lord's appearing? Are thy loins girded, and thy lights burning? If the cry were to break upon thine ears this day, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," couldst thou joyfully respond—"Lo, this is my God, I have waited for Him"? WHEN He may come, we cannot tell;—ages may elapse before *then*. It may be centuries before our graves are gilded with the beams of a Millennial sun. But while He *may* or may *not* come *soon*, He *must* come at some time;—ay, and the day of our death is virtually to all of us the day of His coming.

Reader! put not off the solemn pre-

paration. Be not deceived or deluded with the mocker's presumptuous challenge, "Where is the promise of His coming?" See to it that the calls of an engrossing world without, do not foster this procrastinating spirit within. It may be now or never with thee. Put not off thy sowing time till harvest time. Leave nothing for a dying hour, *but to die*, and calmly to resign thy spirit into the hands of Jesus. Of all times, *that* is the least suitable to have the vessel plenished;—to attend to the great business of life when life is ebbing;—to trim the lamp when the oil is done and it is flickering in its socket;—to begin to watch, when the summons is heard to leave the watch-tower to meet our God!

Were you never struck how often, amid the many *gentle* words of Jesus, the summons "to watch," is over and over repeated, like a succession of alarum-bells breaking ever and anon, amid

chimes of heavenly music, to rouse a sleeping Church and a slumbering world?

Let this last "Word" of thy Lord's send thee to thy knees with the question, — "Am I indeed a servant of Christ?" Have I fled to Him, and am I reposing in Him, as my only Saviour? —Or, am I still lingering, like Lot, when I should be escaping,—sleeping, when I should be waking,—neglecting and trifling, when "a long eternity is lying at my door"? He is my last and only refuge; neglect Him—*all is lost!*

Believer, thou who art standing on thy watch-tower, be more faithful than ever at thy post. Remember what is implied in watching. It is no dreamy state of inactive torpor: it is a holy jealousy over the heart—wakeful vigilance regarding sin—every avenue and loophole of the soul carefully guarded. *Holy living* is the best, the *only*, preparative for *holy dying*. "Persuade

yourself," says Rutherford, "the King is coming. Read His letter sent before Him, 'Behold, I come quickly;' wait with the wearied night-watch for the breaking of the Eastern sky."

Let these "*Words of Jesus*" upon which we have been meditating in this little volume, be as the Golden Bells of old, hung on the vestments of the officiating High Priest;—emitting sweet sounds to His spiritual Israel—telling that the *true High Priest* is still living and pleading in "the Holiest of all;" and that soon He will come forth to pour His blessing on His waiting Church. We have been pleasingly employed in gathering up a few "crumbs" falling from "the Master's table." Soon we shall have, not the "*Words*," but the *presence* of Jesus — not the crumbs falling from His table, but everlasting fellowship with the Master Himself.

"AMEN, EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

"Wherefore

Comfort One Another

with

THESE WORDS."

---

1 Thess. iv. 18.

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